

Question:

Reports have been circulating in the local area and in Toowoomba media that the Department of Defence and Toowoomba Regional Council have been in talks in relation to extending the town water supply to the people whose properties have contaminated bores. Is this true? Would the Department consider covering any of the costs for the project if it goes ahead?

Response:

Defence will fund works to connect Oakey residents without a connection to reticulated town water to the Toowoomba Regional Council's water network, where it is feasible to do so.

Defence has been working with the Toowoomba Regional Council in regards to identifying properties within the township of Oakey that are not connected to the town water supply, and what works would need to be undertaken to enable a connection to reticulated town water if possible.

Defence is working with the Toowoomba Regional Council to quantify the likely costs.

Defence has been taking a precautionary approach to drinking water since May 2014, including providing alternative drinking water to Oakey residents who previously used bore water for drinking, or rainwater tanks that contain, or did contain, bore water. Connecting these residents to reticulated town water would remove a possible exposure pathway.

Defence's priority remains the health and safety of the community and understanding the management of potential impacts of PFAS exposure on the community and its environment. As a result, Defence has been taking a precautionary approach to drinking water. Information on health aspects of PFAS in the Oakey area can be found in the Human Health Risk Assessment, available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Oakey/Default.asp> and via Defence's PFAS Hotline for Oakey, on 1800 136 129.