

**Questions:**

I was wanting to know the exact details of what has been found from the investigation?

Has there been these toxins found in properties surrounding the base? has these toxins been found on the base?

Is there going to be further testing, if so what?

Should the public be concerned at this stage about the findings from the testing so far?

**Response:**

Defence understands the community's concerns in relation to PFAS exposure.

The enHealth guidance statement on per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), updated on 24 June 2016, reiterated that:

*"There is currently no consistent evidence that exposure to PFOS and PFOA causes adverse human health effects. Because these chemicals persist in humans and the environment, enHealth recommends that human exposure to these chemicals is minimised as a precaution."*

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.

The detailed environmental investigation at RAAF Base Edinburgh commenced in November 2016 and is expected to be completed by late 2017.

As part of the investigation previous studies and environmental investigations have been reviewed by the expert consultant to build up a picture of historical use, storage, disposal and management of AFFF and potential impacts of PFAS.

The expert consultant has collected targeted preliminary soil and surface water samples on and off base and have been analysed for PFAS. Twenty soil and surface water samples were collected on and off the base. Sampling results confirm low levels of PFAS in 13 samples. None of the results are above applicable residential (soil) and recreational (surface water) screening criteria.

The existing off-site data is limited, and more data will need to be acquired through sampling and water use surveys. However, the known concentrations to date are low.

The next steps will include further investigation to determine the nature and extent of PFAS on, or in the vicinity of, the base. This will include:

- Sampling of existing bores within the Investigation Area (registered and unregistered). Where data gaps exist, new bores will be installed. Shallow aquifers will be investigated as they may be impacted by surface contamination and are known to be used to top up rainwater tanks and watering stock.
- Samples to be taken of existing deep aquifer (T2) bores within the Investigation Area and within 1 km of ASR injection wells. Generally deep aquifers are not directly impacted by surface contamination and are mainly used for irrigation.

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.

Defence takes this matter very seriously and is committed to implementing appropriate management responses based on the advice of independent scientific experts in this field.

Further information on the investigation can be found at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/edinburgh/Default.asp>