

Questions:

How many of these Katherine residents are being supplied with alternate water?

Without disclosing the actual numbers or their addresses what are the PFAS levels you have detected in some of these bores?

Is there reason for people to worry?

What is the current advice for pregnant women in Katherine, should they be drinking bottled water?

Response:

Health authorities advise that the key path of exposure to PFAS is by drinking contaminated water. Defence has adopted a precautionary approach and is providing alternative sources of drinking water to eligible residents located in close proximity to RAAF Base Tindal when a town water connection is not available, and there is a reliance on the use of a bore for drinking water.

As at 9 May 2017, Defence is providing alternative drinking water to 35 properties in the Katherine Region.

The Katherine town water supply is managed by NT Power and Water Corporation. Based on Power and Water Corporation results that have been submitted to the NT Department of Health, the NT Chief Health Officer has advised that public drinking water is safe for consumption.

Further information on the testing conducted by NT Power and Water Corporation can be found at:

https://www.powerwater.com.au/networks_and_infrastructure/water_services/pfas

To date, all sampling conducted on private property in Katherine has been in response to requests made by residents and property owners. As a result, Defence does not have the permission of the property owners to release the results of this testing publicly and it is at their discretion to publically provide this information.

Defence will also conduct sampling on private property to inform the detailed environmental investigation that commenced in March 2017. Provided the property owner/s provides permission, these results will be made publicly available via investigation reports. Defence will conduct community information sessions to coincide with key milestones and the public release of reports, and will also make the reports publically available on the RAAF Base Tindal investigation website.

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

The Australian Government, led by the Department of Health, has established a Voluntary Blood Testing Program for people that work or live, or have worked or lived, within the investigation areas at Williamtown and Oakey.

The Voluntary Blood Testing Program is being conducted in conjunction with an epidemiological study and these activities are focussed on the Oakey and Williamtown communities because the extent of contamination and the exposure pathways are well understood. The extent of contamination at other sites, including Katherine, is still being determined. These activities at Williamtown and Oakey will contribute to our understanding of the health risks associated with PFAS and inform decisions on the potential for similar activities at other sites in the future.

Current health advice for the public, including pregnant women, can be found in the following factsheets:

- *enHealth Guidance Statements on per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances* available at [http://wcmprd01.central.health/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/\\$File/PFAS-guidance-statement-15June2016.pdf](http://wcmprd01.central.health/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/$File/PFAS-guidance-statement-15June2016.pdf)
- *Australian Health Protection Principal Committee: Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) FactSheet* available at [http://wcmprd01.central.health/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/\\$File/PFAS-factsheet-15June2016.pdf](http://wcmprd01.central.health/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/$File/PFAS-factsheet-15June2016.pdf)
- *Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS): HEALTH EFFECTS AND EXPOSURE PATHWAYS* available at [http://wcmprd01.central.health/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/44CB8059934695D6CA25802800245F06/\\$File/Health-effects-exposure-pathways.pdf](http://wcmprd01.central.health/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/44CB8059934695D6CA25802800245F06/$File/Health-effects-exposure-pathways.pdf)