

Questions:

- At what stage is the investigation into PFAS foams?
- Has contamination been detected?
- Where found?

Response:

Defence has been proactive in initiating an environmental program to investigate the nature and extent of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) including perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonate (PFHxS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), on and in the vicinity of HMAS Cerberus.

In 2016 Defence conducted a Preliminary Sampling Program (PSP) at a number of Defence sites, including HMAS Cerberus, to determine if PFAS are present on, or in the vicinity of the base. At HMAS Cerberus one groundwater and three surface water samples were taken. PFAS was detected in one of the surface water samples.

Specific results are contained in the PSP Report which is available at:

<http://defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/Cerberus/publications.asp>

As a result of the PSP findings, in May 2017 Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation into the nature and extent of PFAS on HMAS Cerberus and in the surrounding area. The first stage of the investigation, the Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI), is now complete. This stage involved the historical review of aqueous film forming foam use at the base to identify on-base sources, to develop an understanding of PFAS migration pathways, and identify potential receptors. This stage of the investigation did not involve testing samples for the presence of PFAS.

The second stage of the investigation, the Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) is due to commence in early September 2017. The DSI will involve sampling and analysis of soil, surface water, sediment, groundwater and land vegetation to further assess the nature and extent of PFAS on or near the base. Information to assist the investigation will also be collected through the collation of water use survey results by local residents and businesses within 1 kilometre of the Base to understand how they use water.

Defence is committed to keeping the community informed and will be conducting an information session on 31 August to provide an update on the environmental investigation and to assist community members to fill in their water use surveys.

Further information on the investigation and the upcoming Community Walk-in Session can be found at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/Cerberus/CommunityUpdates.asp>