

**Questions:**

I'm seeking a response from the Defence Dept over comments made by Field and Game Australia over PFAS contamination in the Heart Morass wetlands:

- they're disappointed about a lack of clarity from Defence around this contamination issue – specifically if it is safe for humans to consume animals from the wetlands and at what level?
- they're disappointed no further testing has been done despite requests from FGA on testing of ducks

What levels of PFAS are in the animals in the Heart Morass wetlands?

**Response to all:**

On 28 September 2017 Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria recommended recreational fish and game hunters do not consume fish, eels or ducks caught at the Heart Morass wetlands.

People who have eaten fish, eels or ducks are not considered to be at risk of any adverse health effects.

This precautionary advice was issued following preliminary testing of per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) levels in plants and animals undertaken by Defence near RAAF Base East Sale.

Questions on the EPA Victoria precautionary advice should be directed to EPA Victoria.

In October 2017, Defence commenced a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (HHERA) to evaluate potential risks PFAS may present to people and the environment within the RAAF Base East Sale Investigation Area. The HHERA involves sampling of soil, water, grass and aquatic plants and animals (including fish and ducks from the Heart Morass).

Defence is committed to providing the community with prompt advice on the progress and findings of the investigation. In order to keep the community informed, Defence is releasing an Interim HHERA on 8 December 2017 and presenting the key findings of this report at a community walk-in session at East Sale on 7 December 2017. Defence and EPA Victoria also met with Field & Game on 6 December 2017 to present the Interim HHERA results and respond to any questions.

The Interim HHERA report will include the levels of PFAS in samples from the Heart Morass.

The Interim HHERA will be followed by a comprehensive HHERA that will look at potential exposures in more detail.

The Interim HHRA will be published on the [Defence East Sale PFAS Investigation website](http://defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/eastsale/):  
<http://defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/eastsale/>

Details of the upcoming community walk-in session are also available on this website.