

Questions:

Wanted to give you the opportunity to comment further, particularly on the amount of time it will take Defence to finish its investigations into contamination of the surrounding area, and begin work on a remediation plan.

Response:

Defence is currently conducting the second stage of the environmental investigation process, a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI), at RAAF Base Pearce. The DSI involves the sampling of soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater, plants and animals on and near RAAF Base Pearce to further assess the nature and extent of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in the investigation area. The DSI report is expected to be finalised by mid-2018. The report will be sent to relevant Government authorities and published on the [RAAF Base Pearce PFAS Investigation website](#).

Based on initial DSI results, Defence commenced a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (HHERA) in late 2016 to better understand the risk of PFAS to people and the local environment. The HHERA will also provide recommendations for ongoing management of exposure pathways to ensure the Bullsbrook community is not at risk of unacceptable levels of PFAS. The HHERA is expected to be finalised and published in mid-2018.

Preliminary findings of the DSI and HHERA were provided to the Bullsbrook community at a community walk-in session on 28 November 2017. The findings identified that of the 49 off-base properties where groundwater was sampled, PFAS levels were above the drinking water, health-based guidelines at four of these properties.

Once the DSI and HHERA are complete, Defence will develop a site specific strategic management plan to outline the management and remediation activities best suited to the region. As PFAS are emerging contaminants, the knowledge regarding the ability to remove these chemicals from the environment is evolving. Defence will continue to monitor advances in remediation technology and implement world-leading remediation and management activities at affected sites.

Further information is available on the [RAAF Base Pearce PFAS Investigation website](#).