

Response provided to journalist  
15 December 2017

**Question**

What stage of water testing for PFOA and PFOS chemicals, is the Department of Defence at? This is in reference to testing undertaken at the RAAF Base Pearce in Bullsbrook.

In the event of detectable levels are there any remediation plans for affected residents?

**Response**

Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation at RAAF Base Pearce in May 2016. As part of the investigation, Defence is undertaking a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) to improve the understanding of the nature and extent of PFAS impacts within the Investigation Area. The sampling for the DSI includes sampling of groundwater and surface water. Sampling is now complete and a detailed report including the sampling results is currently being prepared. The finalised report will be provided to the community, relevant government agencies and regulatory bodies in early 2018.

Based on the investigation findings, Defence has commenced a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (HHERA) to better understand the potential PFAS exposure risks to people and the environment within the Investigation Area. The HHERA is expected to continue through 2018.

The findings from the investigations will be used to develop a site specific management plan. This plan will outline possible remediation and management activities to minimise PFAS exposure. The report will also assist Defence to ensure that remediation and management activities are as effective as possible.

According to the Environmental Health Standing Committee there is currently no consistent evidence exposure to perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanic acid (PFOA) causes adverse human health effects. Health authorities advise that the key path of exposure to PFAS is by drinking contaminated groundwater. Defence has adopted a precautionary approach and is providing alternative sources of drinking water to eligible residents located in close proximity to RAAF Base Pearce who do not have a town water connection and who rely on the use of a bore for drinking water.

Each household's drinking water requirements are assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine the most appropriate water supply arrangements that Defence may be able to provide.

As at 14 December 2017, Defence is providing alternative drinking water to 109 properties in the region.

Residents are welcome to contact the RAAF Pearce Environmental Investigation Project Team on 1800 987 614 or [bullsbrook.defence@ghd.com](mailto:bullsbrook.defence@ghd.com) to discuss eligibility for water assistance.

Further information is available in the latest newsletter which can be downloaded from the [Pearce PFAS Investigation](#) website.