

Questions:

I am writing a story about discrepancies in PFAS readings in both the Tindal and Katherine Town pools.

The water being pumped into the pool reads 0.01ug/L. yet when the YMCA pool was tested it read 0.27ug/L.

The Tindal pool returned a reading of 0.45ug/L.

Does Defence know why this is happening?

Response to all:

On 28 September 2017, PFAS was detected in the YMCA pool at a level of 0.84 ug/L which was over the FSANZ guidance values of 0.70 ug/L for recreational water use.

In order to reduce PFAS levels in the YMCA pool, approximately half the water was drained and replaced with town water by the Katherine Town Council. As a result of mixing the existing pool water and town water, the pool has now recorded a combined perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), and perflourohexane sulfonate (PFHxS) reading of 0.27ug/L. This result was in-line with expectations and remains below the FSANZ guidance values for recreational use.

On 28 September 2017, PFOS and PFHxS were detected in the Tindal pool at 0.45ug/L. This detection was below the FSANZ guidance values for recreational water use. Subsequent testing has consistently recorded levels lower than this. Defence is investigating the cause of the higher result. The most recent results available from the Tindal pool are from a sample taken on 10 October 2017. This sample returned a result of <0.01ug/L.

The YMCA and Tindal pool both contain PFAS levels below the FSANZ guidance values for recreational water use. The guidance values were calculated based on an incidental ingestion of 200mL during recreational activity. Absorption through skin is considered to be negligible. The guidance values have been nationally and internationally reviewed; they allow for a large margin of safety and are appropriate and protective of public health.

Defence will continue to regularly monitor the YMCA and Tindal pools to ensure that PFAS levels remain below the FSANZ guidance values.