

**Response provided to journalist
22 December 2017**

Questions:

I'm following a story that was published in Albury about residents seeking compensation following the PFAS contamination.

I'm wondering when investigation results will be released from across Forest Hill and surrounds.

In addition to an update, I have a few questions:

Since the release of preliminary readings into sites around RAAF Base Wagga, the "acceptable levels" of the chemical found in water sources has changed, with Food Standards Australia New Zealand now deeming 0.07 micrograms of PFAS per litre as acceptable.

According to my sources, Australia appears to be "reinventing the wheel", working on its own guidelines, measures and resolutions despite the UN and other international bodies' previous studies and findings.

Why would Australia "do its own thing"? How concerned is Defence about the findings of its investigations? How will Defence handle class action claims?

Response to all:

Defence has been proactive in initiating an environmental program to investigate the nature and extent of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), on and around 23 Defence sites in Australia.

Defence understands the concern of affected communities regarding the impact of PFAS contamination. Defence is committed to responsible environmental management and being responsible members of the communities in which it operates. Defence continues to work towards the effective monitoring and management of PFAS contamination on and in the vicinity of affected sites across Australia.

In April 2017, The Department of Health released the Health Based Guidance Values for per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), specifically perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorohexane sulfonate (PFHxS).

These values, developed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) at the request of the Department of Health, are a precautionary measure to assist people, investigating agencies and affected communities in minimising their exposure to PFAS.

For further information on Health Based Guidance Values please contact FSANZ or the Department of Health.

Defence handles all legal claims in accordance with the Attorney-General's *Legal Services Directions 2017* (Cth).

Defence is working with the local, state and federal authorities to ensure the most reliable and comprehensive information regarding PFAS is provided to the community.

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