

Questions:

Just had a few queries about PFAS contamination at the Oakey base. There is a reference in the [AECOM reports online](#) to a much earlier report, published in 1991.

That report is titled: "Investigation into waste Disposal Practices Oakey Army Aviation Base and its Effects on Groundwater Quality and Drinking Water Quality for the Oakey Army Base and Township of Oakey" and authored by D.J. Bristow LT.

I'd like to request a copy of the report.

Failing that, my questions are:

- did Bristow identify any potential risk to the environment or health from the discharge of firefighting foam from the Oakey base?
- what were his recommendations?
- Bristow's report suggests defence were aware of a risk to Oakey groundwater and drinking water as early as 1991. Why wasn't action taken at that point to stop the use of 3M Light Water and alert local residents?

Response:

The Bristow report (1991 report) was conducted to "*confirm or deny whether there was a link between waste disposal practices at the base and contamination of groundwater*". This activity was limited to considering a subset of contamination on the base.

In 1991, PFAS was not considered an emerging contaminant and therefore Defence did not investigate for the presence of PFAS at that time.

Bristow found that contamination was:

occurring with respect to contamination by heavy metals, in particular lead and cadmium, as well as organic contamination from methylene chloride." He concluded that "improved training and ... procedures that are enforced will improve the situation dramatically.

The 1991 Bristow recommendations related to operational maintenance and industrial waste disposal practices at the time. As PFAS was not an issue of concern at the time, there were no recommendations relating to PFAS.

Since 1991, Defence has continued to undertake routine environmental investigations and has conducted remediation of contamination such as asbestos, hydrocarbons and waste oil. Defence has also changed practices such as how it disposes of waste oil and paints.

The 1991 report was referenced in the *PFC Background Review and Source Study Report* (2015) by the independent environmental consultants that are conducting the detailed environmental investigation at Army Aviation Centre Oakey (AACO.)

The report was reviewed along with other available historical environmental reports for AACO, to provide general environmental background and information on historical activities on base.

Defence commenced phasing out its use of 3M Lightwater in 2004 and transitioned to Ansulite which does not contain PFOS and PFOA as active ingredients.

Defence is working continuously towards the effective monitoring and management of PFAS contamination on, and in the vicinity of, AACO. PFAS management activities currently being implemented by Defence at AACO include:

- connecting affected residents to town water
- installation of a demonstration water treatment system
- source area removal
- drain maintenance activities
- enhanced community support services.

In addition, Defence continues to engage with industry experts both nationally and internationally to identify the best management and remedial options for PFAS throughout Australia.