

Questions:

1. Does Defence know property prices for homes near RAAF bases using per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances have dropped? Any comment on this?
2. Has Defence provided any financial or other compensation to property owners near the bases in ANY state or territory?
3. Has the testing of personal bores started on properties near Tindal? Will it soon begin? Can you provide me any information about this?
4. What can residents do if they want compensation about the drop in their property prices?

Response:

The Department of Defence is aware of the impacts of PFAS detections and associated environmental investigations on financial lending and property values in the investigation areas in Williamstown and Oakey.

Since early 2016, Defence has engaged with a number of lending institutions, the Australian Property Institute (API), property valuation companies and peak bodies in the sector. This engagement has enabled Defence to share information about Defence's environmental investigation program, and to discuss property lending policies and practices and how valuations are conducted – particularly in the Williamstown and Oakey areas.

Defence is working to ensure that property valuers and lending institutions are well informed about the status of its environmental investigations and is encouraging valuers and lending institutions to consider what is now known about the pathways for exposure of humans to PFAS.

Defence is similarly encouraging valuers to appreciate that across an investigation area, the presence and concentrations of PFAS differs from property to property based on hydrogeology and other factors.

Defence has conducted Residential Sampling within the Katherine area. These tests have been conducted at the requests of the residents to provide advice on levels of PFAS with the bore water on properties. While the results may be used to inform the detailed site investigation, it is primarily for advising residents. Defence has not been authorised by the residents to release the results.

Defence will also conduct sampling on private property to inform the detailed environmental investigation that commenced in March 2017. Provided the property owner/s provides permission, these results will be made publicly available via investigation reports.

Defence continues to be committed to engaging with the local communities throughout the investigations and will be conducting Community Walk-in Sessions at RAAF Base Darwin on 27 June and RAAF Base Tindal on 29 June to provide an update on the investigations including the results of the initial stage of the investigation. The details for the sessions can be found at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Darwin/CommunityConsultation.asp>

<http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Tindal/CommunityConsultation.asp>