

Questions

1. A Defence press release on November 8 2016 indicated Defence would undertake a detailed environmental investigation to determine the nature and extent of PFAS on and in the vicinity of the bases. Is that investigation complete?
2. If so, what were the results pertaining to Holsworthy?
3. If not, when is the investigation to be completed?
4. How frequently has Defence communicated with the Holsworthy, Hammondville, Wattle Gtove and Moorebank communities throughout the process and what was the nature of those communications?
5. In the 12 months since this issue first came to light, has Defence provided drinking water to any residents surrounding the base?
6. In the same period, has Defence declined to provide drinking water to any residents surrounding the base?
7. If drinking water was provided to any residents surrounding the base, what were the circumstances by which those decisions were made?
8. Residents have stated concerns about their drinking water, bathing water and homegrown fruit and vegetables they are watering with their own water supply. Does Defence have any further advice for local residents about the integrity of their water supply?
9. Is any remediation required at the base or anywhere around it?

Response to all

In 2016, Defence completed a Preliminary Sampling Program to investigate the presence of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at 12 Defence sites, including Holsworthy Barracks. Based on the outcome of the Preliminary Sampling Program, it was determined that Holsworthy Barracks required a detailed environmental investigation. The results of this program are available online at: <http://defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/publications/reports.asp>.

In May 2017, Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation into the nature and extent of PFAS at Holsworthy Barracks and the surrounding area. The investigation is being conducted in accordance with the National Environmental

Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure (NEPM) framework, a nationally agreed framework for investigating contamination.

Defence is conducting the first stage of the investigation, the Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI), which involves the historical review of legacy firefighting use and storage to identify where and when legacy firefighting foam was used (sources), how PFAS moves in the environment (migration pathways), and people, animals and the environment that may be exposed to PFAS.

The findings of the PSI will be used to develop a Conceptual Site Model, to guide understanding of sources of PFAS and their potential pathways to people, animals and the environment. A Sampling Analysis and Quality Plan (SAQP) will also be developed to assist the second stage of the investigation, the Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) which involves sampling of soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater on-base and in the surrounding region to collect information and better understand how PFAS impacts the environment.

The findings of the investigation will be used to inform management responses and help develop strategies to minimise PFAS exposure, should these be required.

As a precaution, Defence will provide alternative drinking water to residents who fulfil certain criteria within the Investigation Areas surrounding sites under investigation. At this time, there are no residents receiving alternative water in the Holsworthy area as Defence is not aware of any properties in close proximity to Holsworthy Barracks that do not have a town water connection, and are using water from bores or creeks for domestic purposes. This was confirmed by a water use survey and registered bore search undertaken in the local area by Defence's investigation consultant.

Defence has received advice from Sydney Water that the town-water supply for the Holsworthy area is not impacted by PFAS.

Defence is committed to regularly updating the community throughout the investigation. Defence held Community Walk-in Sessions in March and August 2017, with the next Community Walk-in Session to be held in the first quarter of 2018 to provide the initial findings of the investigation and outline the next steps. Advertisement of the event will be placed in the local newspaper and placed on the investigation website for [Holsworthy Barracks](#).

If local residents are concerned about any aspect of the Holsworthy Barracks Details Site Investigation, we encourage them to contact the Holsworthy PFAS hotline on 1800 431 329 or visit the Holsworthy Barracks website site at: www.defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/Holsworthy/.