

Questions:

We have been following this issue for a number of years locally and were wondering where the testing for our local bases HMAS Albatross, HMAS Creswell and Jervis Bay Airfield are progressing

Could you help me with that and also let me know where testing is up to and if any other community meetings are next scheduled?

Response:

Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation on and in the surrounding area of HMAS Albatross in May 2016.

Currently, Defence is in the process of conducting a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) and a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (HHERA) as part of the environmental investigation at HMAS Albatross. The DSI aims to define the nature and extent of PFAS contamination and will identify PFAS source areas on-base and the pathways of PFAS migration off-base. The HHERA will provide a better understanding of risks posed by PFAS to people and the environment.

Since April 2017, further sampling of groundwater off-base and plants and animals has been conducted to inform both the DSI and HHERA for HMAS Albatross which are both anticipated to be completed and published in late 2017.

In March 2017, Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation on and in the surrounding area of Jervis Bay Range Facility (JBRF). Due to its close proximity to JBRF, HMAS Creswell falls within the investigation area and will be considered in the JBRF investigation.

A DSI and a HHERA are currently underway as part of the environmental investigation at JBRF. The detailed environmental investigation at JBRF is expected to be completed in mid-2018.

Once investigation findings are finalised for JBRF and HMAS Albatross, Defence will provide the results to the local communities. The findings of the investigations will be used to inform mitigation strategies to minimise long-term PFAS exposure to the local community and environment.

The nature and extent of the PFAS presence at each site is different due to the differing nature of the topography, hydrology and hydrogeology.

The investigations at the areas surrounding HMAS Albatross and JBRF have identified that there are no residents using groundwater for domestic purposes. As a result, there are no properties in the JBRF and HMAS Albatross areas were receiving alternative drinking water.

Defence understands community concerns in relation to PFAS detections and is committed to working with the relevant authorities to ensure the affected communities are provided with the most up-to-date information relating to PFAS and the investigations.

Defence expects to conduct the next Community Walk-in Sessions in Albatross in late 2017 to present the findings of the DSI and HHERA. Defence also expects to hold Community Walk-in Sessions in Jervis Bay in late 2017 to discuss current activities, scheduling and potential sampling around the Wreck Bay and Jervis Bay village and communities.