

**Response provided to journalist  
18 December 2018**

**Questions:**

Could I please request an interview or statement to address the following questions:

1. Some people in Wreck Bay and Jervis Bay would like to have their blood tested for PFAS. Will Defence be providing blood testing for the people of Wreck Bay and Jervis Bay village?
2. There has been a call for tank water to be supplied to the people of Wreck Bay and Jervis Bay. Will Defence be providing tank water for the people of Wreck Bay and Jervis Bay?
3. Will compensation be provided to the people of Wreck Bay for the contamination of their creeks and fishing grounds?
4. Can you give a guarantee that it is safe for visitors to Hyams Beach, Green Patch and the Booderee National Park to swim and fish in the waters given the proximity to Jervis Bay Range and the fact that several of the contaminated creeks, Flat Rock Creek and Captain's Lagoon, drain into Jervis Bay itself?
5. What is being done to inform visitors to the Jervis Bay area of the contamination and the risks so they can make informed decisions?

**Response:**

The Department of Defence is conducting a detailed environmental investigation into the nature and extent of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination on, and in the vicinity of Jervis Bay Range Facility as a result of the historical use of legacy firefighting foams at the Base.

Sampling of Lake Windermere, the primary source of Jervis Bay Territory's drinking water, has not detected PFAS above the drinking water guidance values. Testing of the Jervis Bay Territory's treated potable water, which services Booderee National Park, found no detectable traces of PFAS. As a result of the sampling, Defence is not exploring the provision of alternative drinking water to residents in the area surrounding the Jervis Bay Range Facility.

While there is precautionary advice against eating fish or shellfish caught from Flat Rock Creek, Captains Lagoon, Summercloud Creek and Mary Creek, there is no precautionary advice regarding other marine waters surrounding Jervis Bay.

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) provided the PFAS biota sampling data from the investigation to the NSW PFAS Taskforce for review. The Taskforce has determined that there is no requirement for precautionary dietary advice for the consumption of seafood from Jervis, Summercloud and Wreck Bays (within NSW waters) at this time.

Additionally, there is no PFAS-related advice against the conduct of recreational water-based activities in, and around, Jervis Bay Territory (with the exception of Mary Creek).

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Defence is being transparent in making the verified test results available to the local community, and is sharing this information with relevant state and local authorities to assist with planning.

Further information on the environmental investigation into PFAS can be found on the Defence website at:

[www.defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/JervisBay/Default.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/JervisBay/Default.asp)

As Defence is not a health authority, it cannot provide health advice, as this is the role of respective State and/or local health authorities and practitioners.

According to The Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth), there is currently no consistent evidence that exposure to PFOS and PFOA causes adverse human health effects. Because these chemicals persist in humans and the environment, enHealth recommends that human exposure to these chemicals is minimised as a precaution.

In May 2018, enHealth's advice was reaffirmed by an independent Expert Health Panel established by the Department of Health.

Further information on blood testing and the epidemiological study being conducted by the Australian National University can be obtained from the Australian Government Department of Health by calling 1800 941 180, via [health.pfas@health.gov.au](mailto:health.pfas@health.gov.au), or by visiting [www.health.gov.au/pfas](http://www.health.gov.au/pfas)

Based on the knowledge and evidence available at this time, compensation is not currently being considered as a result of PFAS contamination at Jervis Bay. The Australian Government will continue to review its PFAS management practices and to adjust them as necessary to respond to any new evidence as it arises.