

Questions:

- Firstly, can you confirm if PFAS was found in the fire fighting foam used or at the defence site at Moorebank?
- Can you pin point on a map where exactly the fire fighting foam was used at the Holsworthy Barracks? (This can be done by creating a screenshot via Google). Residents are calling for an answer on this.
- How could PFAS from the AFFF get into the water, discovered through samples taken from this site? (were people drinking from the river or dam? Please explain further.)
- What years / how long was the defence force using this fire fighting foam?
- When did the defence force at Moorebank discontinue use of this fire fighting foam?
- When did the Australian Defence Force become aware of the issue - that fire fighting foam could contain PFAS?
- When and why was this fire fighting foam used? (can you give us an example of the training? What it was for etc.)
- What did the Environmental investigation reveal about the Moorebank site?
- Does the AFFF pose a potential health risk linked to cancer for those involved in the training using this or for those in contact with the site?
- Have defence staff been health checked due to this problem?
- How did the meeting go on Thursday February 22 at the Moorebank Community Centre with residents?
- Is it possible the AFFF has gone into the Georges River and affected the river water?

Response:

Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation to better understand the nature and extent of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), on and around Holsworthy Barracks, in June 2017.

There are three main stages to the investigation: 1) A Preliminary Site Investigation; 2) A Detailed Site Investigation (DSI); and 3) If deemed necessary by the findings of stage 2, a Human Health and/or Ecological Risk Assessment. This may be followed by management and remediation works – pending the findings of the investigation.

The Community Walk-in Session conducted on 22 February 2018, at Moorebank Community Centre, was to discuss the findings of the Preliminary Site investigation at the Base. In total, 28 community members attended the session; with two representatives from the NSW Environmental Protection Authority and a rep from the office of the Member for Holsworthy, also in attendance.

The Preliminary Site Investigation involved the historical review of legacy firefighting foam 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 (receptors).

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The Detailed Site Investigation is now underway. This involves sampling and testing of soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater on and off the Base. Testing of plant and animal samples may also be completed.

The Department of Defence is undertaking a national program to review, investigate and implement a comprehensive approach to manage the impacts of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on, and in the vicinity of, some of its bases around Australia

From the 1970s onwards, firefighting foam - containing PFAS, as active ingredients - was used at Defence bases for emergency firefighting situations and training. For Holsworthy, in particular, this involved emergency response for the aviation operations at Luscombe Airfield.

In 2003 Defence became aware that two types of PFAS: perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and (PFOA) were emerging persistent organic pollutants. In 2004, Defence commenced phasing out its use of these foams.

Defence cannot provide health advice as this is the role of respective State and/or local health authorities and practitioners. Defence's position on health issues relating to PFAS aligns with the enHealth guidance statements as outlined by the [Australian Government Department of Health](#).

According to the [Environmental Health Standing Committee \(enHealth\)](#) Guidance Statements on per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, released in June 2016, there is currently no consistent evidence that exposure to PFAS causes adverse human health effects.

A Factsheet on the findings of the Preliminary Site Investigation for Holsworthy Barracks, can be found on our [website](#).

More information on the Holsworthy Barracks PFAS Investigation can be found at: www.defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/Holsworthy

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