Response provided to journalist
6 February 2018

Question:
Can I get an update on how many homes in the Pearce region of WA the Dept is now delivering water to?

Has this water replacement program been expanded to – or is it being considered for - homes near any other defence or former defence sites in WA?

If so, please detail which ones.

What has been the cost to date of delivering bottled water to WA homes?

Can I ask whether Defence is also advising or administering any PFAS investigation at Perth Airport or any other civilian airport in WA?

Response:
As at 1 February 2018, Defence is providing alternative drinking water to 117 properties in the vicinity of RAAF Base Pearce.

To date, four properties within the RAAF Base Pearce investigation area have returned results above the drinking water Health Based Guidance Values developed by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand - with residential sampling still ongoing.

Defence is offering bottled water as a precautionary means of minimising the potential exposure risk to PFAS for residents who meet the following criteria: are in the investigation area; do not have a town water connection; and rely on the use of a bore for drinking water.

This approach will remain in place for the duration of the investigation. If required, long term arrangements will then be considered based on the outcomes of the investigation.

This approach is being applied at four other Defence sites across Western Australia - Gingin Satellite Airfield, RAAF Base Learmonth, HMAS Stirling, and Naval Communication Station Harold E. Holt A & B where Defence is carrying out a Detailed Environmental Investigation into potential PFAS contamination.

The sampling results and public consultations on water use at these sites have not identified the need to provide nearby residents with alternative drinking water.

Defence's PFAS environmental investigations are confined to Defence sites. Civilian airports, including Perth Airport, do not fall under jurisdiction of the Department of Defence.