

Response provided to journalist

16 January 2018

Questions:

How many outliers were tested and what suburbs were they in?

How many of those outliers were deemed to have PFAS contaminants on their property or in bores/groundwater?

What action will be taken now more properties have been identified?

What decisions are pending over whether the investigation area will be expanded beyond existing investigation boundaries?

How many groundwater monitoring wells have been installed as part of both the RAAF Base Townsville and Lavarack Barracks environmental investigations and where?

How many more will be installed, where and when?

Response:

Defence has not conducted any bore water sampling outside of the designated RAAF Base Townsville Investigation Area including at properties in the suburb of Mount Louisa. Furthermore, there have been no monitoring wells installed outside the Investigation Area.

For clarification, there have been two locations where fish have been sampled from outside the investigation area, as a background sample. The background sampling will be used as comparison results with those taken within the Investigation Area. This is a common scientific practice in environmental investigations. Surface water and sediment samples have also been collected at these locations as a means of validating the existing Investigation Area.

A total of 64 new groundwater monitoring wells have been installed as part of the RAAF Base Townsville Investigation to date, with a further six planned across Mount St John and Pallarenda this week. The RAAF Base Townsville and Lavarack Barracks investigations are at different stages. Currently there have been no groundwater monitoring wells installed as part for the Lavarack Barracks Investigation.

Groundwater analytical results and groundwater flow contours are used to determine whether the Investigation Area dimensions need to be changed. Analytical results from the groundwater monitoring wells installed between December 2017 and January 2018, along with groundwater contouring in January 2018, will be used to interpret whether the Investigation Area dimensions need to be revised.

Once sampling is complete and the findings analysed, a detailed report will be prepared and shared with relevant government and regulatory bodies as well as the community. The report will include all sampling results and is expected to be complete by mid 2018.

