

**Questions:**

Please see the below correspondence from mid-2016, where Defence stated it was "committed" to finalising its trade waste agreement with Hunter Water allowing the Williamtown RAAF base to be connected to the sewerage network.

I note that more than 18 months has passed. Are the parties at an impasse? Is it correct that this is because Defence does not wish to have limits placed on the levels of PFAS it discharges into the sewerage network? If that is not the issue, can you articulate what the problem is?

**Response to all:**

Negotiations with Hunter Water continue. Defence remains committed to finalising the Trade Waste Agreement as quickly as possible and will be seeking a high level meeting with the Hunter Water Board to close out the outstanding issues as soon as practical.

Defence continues to negotiate the Trade Waste Agreement with the Hunter Water Corporation, however, negotiations have been delayed due to a number of commercial and legal matters. These matters have been complicated by the emerging issue of PFAS as a contaminant and, therefore, the lack of a NSW trade waste regulatory framework incorporating PFAS management within the trade waste context.

Sewerage and trade waste from RAAF Base Williamtown are currently treated at the sewerage treatment plant on Defence owned and controlled land, adjacent to Newcastle Airport. The last PFAS results from testing on 5 April 2017 shows PFOS at 1.3 parts per billion, PFOA 0.04 parts per billion and PFHxS <0.01 parts per billion.

The waste is not currently treated for PFAS where it remains on Defence land. Where Defence removes waste from the site, that waste is treated in accordance with New South Wales Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.