

Questions:

I have a question regarding the PFAS contamination at RAAF Base Wagga:
Has it been contained?

Response:

Defence commenced phasing out the use of legacy fire-fighting foams containing PFAS in 2004. However, PFAS is slow to break down in the environment and is still migrating off-base, primarily through groundwater and surface water by way of the storm water drain network.

Due to the chemical structure of PFAS, there are limited proven remediation technologies currently available. Long term management technologies are emerging through ongoing research, and Defence is keeping up to date with developments and continuing to engage with industry experts, both nationally and internationally, to identify the best management options for PFAS throughout Australia.

The immediate focus of Defence's management and remediation activities is to ensure that people, plants and animals are not exposed to levels of PFAS above the relevant guidance values.

Effective management and remediation strategies need to be informed by site-specific factors, including the site's hydrogeology, the extent of contamination and the nature of migration pathways. The Wagga environmental investigation is assessing these factors. Once the investigation is complete, Defence will have the information needed to develop a PFAS management area plan tailored to the unique conditions at Wagga.