

**Questions:**

Just following up on yesterday's community walk in at Nowra:

How were the numbers at the latter session and presentation. How many?

I know the human health risk off base and both the environment on and off base are being studied. But no one has mentioned the staff on base both current and former?

What strategies are being put in place for current staff at Albatross and the JB

Range - are their now restricted sites they cant go into?

What about former staff/personnel who have worked with PFAs over long periods of times - what testing is being done on them?

Is any testing being done?

What sort of communication has there been with former staff if any?

Will there be separate studies into the former staff etc?

The Herald reports have cast some doubt on the validity of the science surrounding PFAS - where does defence stand on this and the possible affects it may have had on former staff.

**Response:**

On 21 June Defence held a community walk-in session to present the findings of the addendum to the HMAS *Albatross* Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment, attending were:

- 27 members of the community attended the session in total
- 18 attended the first presentation
- 9 attended the second.

Prior to the community walk-in session Defence held a briefing for staff at *Albatross*.

The Human Health Risk Assessment and Addendum assessed exposure risks both on *Albatross* and in the surrounding area. These assessments did not identify exposure risks to base personnel, contractors or visitors.

Current or former Defence members at *Albatross* who are concerned about exposure to PFAS are encouraged to access the Australian Defence Force Historical Occupational Exposure Record or Defence Asbestos Hazardous Chemicals Exposure Scheme. Further information about these schemes is available on the [Defence PFAS website](#).

In addition to these schemes, the Australian Government has commissioned the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University to undertake an [epidemiological study](#) to look at potential causes and patterns of health effects in the communities of Williamstown, NSW; Oakey, Queensland; and Katherine, NT. This study is being informed by the results of voluntary blood testing, where permission is given. While the study and associated voluntary blood testing are not focused on *Albatross*, the findings will be relevant to PFAS exposure in any region.

Response provided to journalist  
28 June 2018

Defence is not an expert on matters relating to population health and relies on the expertise of relevant health authorities. Defence refers to the guidance issued by the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) when assessing and managing any potential risks to human health posed by PFAS. The enHealth guidance statements advise there is currently no consistent evidence that exposure to PFAS causes adverse human health effects. However, because these chemicals persist in humans and the environment, enHealth recommends human exposure to these chemicals is minimised as a precaution. In May 2018 this advice was reaffirmed by the findings of the independent Expert Health Panel for PFAS which took into account evidence available from both Australian and international scientific research.

Defence PFAS investigations are conducted by industry experts and informed by a wide range of Government and Industry advice and research.

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