

## **Response Provided to Journalist**

**22 March 2019**

### **Question:**

I would like to ask some questions regarding an updated PFAS warning for the Bremer River, which I believe was made last week.

Can I have some information on the new recommendations such as when and where the testing was done; test results; how much this exceeds the recommended levels, which species of fish were tested; how many; and finally, has anyone wondered if there is any risk with fish caught upstream also?

What is Defence doing to quickly inform people of these new and updated risk areas?

### **Response:**

On 8 March 2019, Defence released expanded interim precautionary fish consumption advice further downstream of the Amberley Investigation Area, to the Cribb Park area. This follows the review of sampling results from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Amberley per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) Environmental Investigation, and is based on recommendations from the Queensland Department of Health.

Precautionary advice was first issued in June 2018, advising residents not to consume fish from the Bremer River and Warrill Creek adjacent to RAAF Base Amberley based on testing conducted in April 2018 for the environmental investigation.

Following a review of fish testing at Cribb Park and Riverlink undertaken in October and November 2018, and at recommendation of Queensland Health, this advice was extended to include areas of the Bremer River downstream of RAAF Base Amberley.

The fish sampling involved the collection of a total of 47 fish including eel, bass, mullet, perch, catfish, carp and salmon. The fish were collected from nine locations along the Bremer River and four locations along the Warrill Creek. Not all species were caught at each location.

A range of PFAS chemicals were detected in the majority of the samples analysed. Perfluorooctanesulfonate acid (PFOS) was the predominant PFAS detected. The PFOS + Perfluorohexanesulphonic (PFHxS) results ranged from below laboratory detection limits to maximums of 0.8569 mg/kg in fish fillets and 1.5068 mg/kg in fish liver. The respective Food Standards Australia New Zealand trigger points for PFOS + PFHxS for fish fillets and fish livers are 0.0052 mg/kg and 0.280 mg/kg.

Testing of the fish was done at a laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities for the analysis of PFAS in fish. Defence received the validated test results in February 2019 and the results were promptly provided to the Queensland Government as part of regular reporting of investigation results.

In addition to distributing a media release to media outlets, a media statement was posted on the Defence National PFAS Investigation and Management website and the information

was circulated via e-mail to the community and stakeholder members that have opted in for investigation updates. The database includes contacts in local fishing groups and associations who forward relevant advice to their members.

Defence is preparing new signs with the expanded fish warning advice and is working with Ipswich City Council to replace the current signs along the Bremer River and Warrill Creek at locations confirmed by a range of sources to be popular fishing spots.

Additional fish samples have now been collected upstream of the Base which will be used as reference samples for the Amberley PFAS investigation. The results will be published in the Human Health Risk Assessment report expected to be released to the public by the end of the second quarter of 2019, in parallel with the next Community Engagement.

Defence will continue to provide all data to the Queensland Government who make an assessment of exposure risk based on these results.

Defence will continue to keep the community informed of investigation findings.