

**THE HON DARREN CHESTER MP**  
**Assistant Minister for Defence**

**Assistant Minister for Defence visits RAAF Base  
Williamtown**

The Assistant Minister for Defence and Federal Member for Gippsland, Darren Chester, visited RAAF Base Williamtown in Newcastle today where he met with NSW Environment Minister, Mr Mark Speakman.

Mr Chester and Mr Speakman were briefed on the progress of Defence's environmental investigations into perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) contamination from the historical use of fire fighting foams.

"Today we had an opportunity to visit RAAF Base Williamtown to learn more about these legacy contaminants," Mr Chester said.

"I reaffirmed to Mr Speakman Defence's continued commitment to work closely with NSW government agencies, local Councils and other Commonwealth agencies, to further investigate the nature and extent of the contamination while developing options for managing this issue.

"I would like to thank the Williamtown community for providing information to Defence about their use of bore water.

"This has greatly assisted Defence to start providing drinking water to four residences in the area being investigated for potential PFOS and PFOA contamination.

"Defence has tested bore water at 14 residential properties with water samples taken from 17 private bores in total. Rainwater tanks which previously contained bore water were also sampled at three of these properties."

The results of these tests are expected shortly and will be verified and interpreted as soon as possible so they can be provided to residents.

Defence's priority at this time is to ensure residents within the investigation area continue to have access to safe drinking water. A number of drains, dams and other surface water bodies will also be sampled as part of the next phase of the Defence environmental investigation, which is due to commence shortly.

In addition to visiting the base, Mr Chester and Mr Speakman attended the first meeting of the Williamtown Elected Representatives Reference Group and met with members of the Williamtown Contamination Investigation Community Reference Group.

Defence and other organisations in Australia and around the world used fire fighting foams containing PFOS and PFOA from the 1970s to early 2000s to suppress liquid fuel fires.

Residents can access more information about Defence's environmental investigations at: [www.defence.gov.au/id/Williamtown/Default.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/id/Williamtown/Default.asp)

Residents who would like to have their bore water tested can contact Defence either on 1800 011 443 or via email on [Williamtown.defence@urs.com](mailto:Williamtown.defence@urs.com)

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