

AVIATION FUEL CONTAMINATION RAAF BASE AMBERLEY (FIRST AND FINAL UPDATE)

Comment:

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## HOT ISSUE BRIEF

### ISSUE: AVIATION FUEL CONTAMINATION RAAF BASE AMBERLEY (FIRST and FINAL UPDATE)

**SENSITIVITY:** This incident has the potential to attract media interest, particularly if Heavy Lift operations are affected.

#### KEY ISSUES:

- A routine inspection revealed an anomalous substance in the aviation fuel tanks at RAAF Base Amberley.
- As part of standard procedures, all jet aviation fuel on the base was quarantined pending testing.
- The results from the fuel testing are that the majority of fuel holdings at Amberley meet specifications and are deemed fit for purpose. A small quantity of fuel is subject to further testing and will remain quarantined.
- Planned aircraft operations at Amberley are unaffected.

- **No known media attention has been given to this matter.**

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### **BACKGROUND: FUEL CONTAMINATION AT RAAF BASE AMBERLEY**

Earlier this month while conducting bottom water drains, a blue liquid was removed from one of the drain points located between the quarantine tanks – VST 5 and VST 6. The tanks either side of the common drain point were immediately quarantined and this fuel was prevented from entering the wider Amberley fuel farm.

Based on advice from Amberley fuel farm personnel, no contamination has been found in any other tanks or piping system within the fuel farm or piping itself. Therefore it is highly likely that the contamination has been contained within the quarantine tanks.

Subsequent analysis of the blue liquid found that the combination of chemicals indicated that there was potential for contamination to present in the aviation fuel. The impact of any contamination was unknown at the time, so as a precautionary measure, all fuel within the fuel farm was required to be tested to ensure that it met specifications and was fit-for-purpose.

Testing by a specialist commercial laboratory has confirmed that the fuel in most tanks at Amberley meets specifications and is fit for purpose. A small amount of fuel that was stored within the immediate pipes and tanks where the blue liquid was discovered will undergo further analysis.

Aircraft based at Amberley were not affected by the quarantine and testing arrangements and contingency plans ensured that any planned or emergency operations would not be affected.

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## **TALKING POINTS**

Air Force can confirm that all aviation jet fuel had been quarantined at RAAF Base Amberley near Ipswich in Queensland.

The fuel had been quarantined while investigations determined the origin and impact, if any, on the finding of an anomalous substance found in the fuel system.

Quarantining the fuel is a standard precautionary measure that enabled all appropriate and necessary testing to be conducted to ensure that the fuel met specifications and was fit for purpose.

The testing of the fuel has since revealed no contamination in the majority of the fuel holdings at Amberley. A small amount of fuel is subject to further testing.

Planned aircraft operations at RAAF Base Amberley were not affected by the quarantining and testing of the fuel. Contingency plans also ensured that there was no detriment to emergency tasking were that to have occurred.

Aviation fuel is supplied by a commercial operator to the RAAF Base at Amberley.

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