



PFAS Management Area Plan completion and next steps HMAS Cerberus

KEY POINTS

- **All actions within the PFAS Management Area Plan for HMAS Cerberus have been addressed.**
- **A Final Site Condition Report has been prepared by an independent contaminated land site auditor accredited by the Environment Protection Authority Victoria.**
- **Defence will continue to monitor PFAS on and around HMAS Cerberus, and take further action if required.**
- **All plans and reports are published on the Defence website.**

What is a PFAS Management Area Plan?

The PFAS Management Area Plan (PMAP) sets out Defence's activities to manage the risks from per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination on and around HMAS Cerberus.

What is a Final Site Condition Report?

The Final Site Condition Report is prepared by a technical adviser to provide an independent assessment of whether Defence has suitably addressed the PFAS management actions detailed in the latest PMAP.

Auditors are approved by Environment Protection Authority Victoria to undertake a review of Defence's actions to date and verify if remediation has been completed to the extent practicable.

Background

In 2018, Defence completed detailed environmental investigations into per- and poly- fluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination on and around HMAS Cerberus.

Investigations determined that most PFAS are found in areas where firefighting foams were previously used and stored. These are called source areas. PFAS moves from these source areas into surface water and groundwater, and can then move off the base into the wider environment.

While the 2018 investigations concluded that there was no significant potential for the migration of PFAS beyond the base boundary and no significant PFAS exposure risks to the surrounding community, the PFAS Management Area Plan was developed in 2018 to manage and reduce the risks of PFAS exposure and migration from the base.

Final Site Condition Report

A Final Site Condition Report has been prepared by Defence's technical adviser, a contaminated land site auditor accredited by the Environment Protection Authority Victoria. The report provides an independent assessment that remediation and the PFAS management actions have been completed and ongoing monitoring and management measures are appropriate.

PMAP completion

Defence has addressed the actions set out in the PMAP as follows:

- **Action 1 – Continue the use of PFAS-free training foam for all training exercises within the Fire Training Ground**
 - Use of PFAS-free training foam (such as Solberg) for all training exercises has been implemented since 2017.
- **Action 2 – Develop integrated options with Base Redevelopment works to undertake source removal and/or treatment of PFAS within source areas**
 - The Fire Training Ground was the primary source area and was remediated as part of the Base Redevelopment works.
- **Action 3 – Mitigate on-base exposure risks associated with intrusive/maintenance works**
 - Administrative control measures, such as Workplace Health and Safety practices, are in place.
- **Action 4 – Mitigate risks associated with precluded beneficial uses, such as stock watering or irrigation**
 - Administrative control measures, such as a ban on the use of groundwater extraction except for monitoring or temporary construction dewatering purposes, are in place.
- **Action 5 – Implement the Ongoing Monitoring Plan**
 - Ongoing monitoring of groundwater and surface water has been occurring on the base and in the surrounding area since 2019.
 - More than 879 samples have been collected.
 - The Ongoing Monitoring Plan is available on the Defence website at: www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/pfas/pfas-management-sites/hmas-cerberus.



Next steps

In the future Defence will:

- continue monitoring surface water and groundwater on and around HMAS *Cerberus*, with the next round of sampling scheduled for May 2025.
- continue publishing monitoring results on the Defence website.

The technical adviser has endorsed these next steps, and the Environment Protection Authority Victoria was consulted in the preparation of the HMAS *Cerberus* Final Site Condition report.

If future monitoring results indicate changes to Defence's understanding of PFAS on and around HMAS *Cerberus*, Defence will respond and take appropriate action.

Further information

A full copy of the Final Site Condition report, site investigation reports and factsheets for HMAS *Cerberus* are available via the QR code and on the Defence website at:

www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/pfas/pfas-management-sites/hmas-cerberus.





Frequently Asked Questions

Is PFAS still leaving the base and is there a risk to people who live nearby?

Defence conducted a screening assessment of potential risk to human health and the environment in 2018. This assessment looked at the PFAS exposure risks to people living, working and undertaking recreational activities within the PFAS management area, and to local plant and animal life.

This assessment found that PFAS contamination from HMAS *Cerberus* presented a low exposure risk to human health and to local plant and animal life. More details can be found in the 2018 Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) and the DSI Findings factsheet on the website at: www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/pfas/pfas-management-sites/hmas-cerberus.

The 2020-2023 Ongoing Monitoring Report found the human health risk to the community is low.

It is not possible to remove all PFAS from the environment. A small amount of PFAS still leaves HMAS *Cerberus* mostly via surface water. The technical adviser concluded that remediation to minimise exposure to PFAS contamination from HMAS *Cerberus* was not warranted since the identified risks were low. Defence will continue to monitor PFAS in the environment, and take action if required.

Health

What are the human health impacts from PFAS exposure?

Research on the health effects of PFAS in Australia and internationally is continuously evolving and health guidelines for PFAS differ around the world. The Department of Health and Aged Care is the leading agency responsible for Australian health guidance on PFAS. Information about health impacts from PFAS exposure is available online at: www.health.gov.au/topics/environmental-health/about/environmental-toxins-and-contaminants/pfas

Defence

Who has Defence consulted with throughout the PFAS Investigation and Management Program?

Defence continues to consult with, and be advised by, Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies. Since the program was established in 2015, Defence has continuously supported and collaborated on a wide range of research projects with government, industry, academia, and other research partners.

All assessment, ongoing monitoring and remediation is conducted by suitably qualified consultants, with EPA appointed/accredited auditors providing independent advice. Sample analysis is undertaken by independent and accredited laboratories.

What ongoing support will Defence provide to the community?

Defence's priority is to support communities impacted by PFAS contamination on and around Defence bases by reducing their exposure risk. Ongoing sampling of PFAS on and around HMAS *Cerberus* will continue. Monitoring results will continue to be provided to the Environment Protection Authority Victoria and be published on the Defence website.

Supporting ADF Personnel

The health and safety of our personnel, both current and former, is a primary concern for Defence, and for the Australian Government. Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs have a number of services available to support Defence personnel in relation to PFAS exposure. Current and former personnel who suspect that they have been exposed to PFAS as a result of their employment with Defence are encouraged to call 1800 333 362 for more information about the support services available.

Contact Us



1800 333 362



pfas.enquiry@defence.gov.au

Scan the QR code to find out more about Defence's
PFAS Investigation and Management Program.

