



Army Aviation Centre Oakey – PFAS Management Area Plan Update

PFAS Investigation and Management Program

Background

The Department of Defence has completed a detailed environmental investigation, to better understand the nature and extent of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), resulting from historical use of fire fighting foams on, and in the vicinity of, Army Aviation Centre Oakey.

The outcomes from the investigation are being used to develop a PFAS Management Area Plan (PMAP) for the Oakey Management Area.

About the PMAP

The PMAP will inform the activities that Defence will undertake to manage and reduce the risks of PFAS exposure for the Oakey community. The PMAP will further guide Defence to:

- Manage known sources of contamination such as the former fire training ground, the former fire station and foam training area, and the AFFF settling tanks;
- reduce PFAS migration from the source of contamination on Base to off-Base; and
- manage identified exposure risks to the community or environment such as consumption of groundwater within the Management Area.

The PMAP will prioritise the implementation of practical solutions to prevent or minimise PFAS migrating from the Base. It is likely that this will include:

- reducing the mass of the PFAS contamination source;
- blocking or diverting the migration pathway of the contamination from the source to a receptor; and/or
- reducing the PFAS concentrations in migration pathways.

Developing the PMAP involves a review of the sources of the contamination and the key ways it is migrating into the wider community. It will also include a comparison and evaluation of a range of available PFAS management actions to identify possible options for the site.

Once finalised, the PMAP will be reviewed regularly or when new technology is available.

Ongoing Monitoring Plan

As part of the PMAP, an Ongoing Monitoring Plan (OMP) is being prepared which outlines the sampling program that will be undertaken by Defence to monitor and track the PFAS contamination over the coming years.

The OMP will provide an evidence base for the ongoing management of the PFAS contamination including looking at changes in concentration and geographical spread.

It will assist Defence to evaluate the progress and success of the management activities being undertaken, or identify where more might need to be done.

The OMP will be a regularly reviewed and if required, changes to the monitoring frequency or locations of sampling may occur.

Management Activities

Based on the data collected throughout the investigation, Defence has already implemented a range of PFAS management activities on the Base.

Under the PMAP, the following activities will continue to be undertaken.

Water Treatment Plants

Defence has established a Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to treat contaminated groundwater beneath the Base at the Former Fire Training Area. The WTP is operational and treating water to below the adopted drinking water criteria. Defence is targeting source areas where the groundwater is heavily contaminated. An additional WTP will be installed by the end of this calendar year and be operational by the first quarter of 2019. The treated water will be safely re-injected back into the aquifer reducing the amount of contaminated groundwater leaving the Base.

Defence is committed to keep providing the community with up to date information, including analytical data on





the treated water. This is available on the Defence website and is updated monthly.



Former Fire Training Area Water Treatment Plant

Removal of Source Areas at the Former Fire Training Area

The PFAS Environmental Investigation has identified the Former Fire Training Area as a significant PFAS source area. Defence is planning works to remove PFAS impacted soil at and around the Former Fire Training Area. Testing of soil will be undertaken to define the excavation zone in order to most effectively reduce the overall mass of PFAS in the area. The excavated soil from the area will be stockpiled for off-site disposal and subsequent treatment at an approved licensed facility.

Onsite Open Drain Maintenance Works

The drain maintenance activities on Base were completed in February 2018. Almost two kilometres of open drains have been excavated and 12,100m³ waste material disposed off-base to an authorised waste disposal facility. Sediment from the drains was also removed in order to reduce the migration of PFAS in surface water off-base.

Toowoomba Regional Council Town Water Connections

Defence engaged the Toowoomba Regional Council to connect 36 properties that are relying on tanks or bores for drinking water and which are affected by PFAS. This work was completed in June 2018.

For an overview of management activities across the PFAS Investigation and Management Program, visit:

www.defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/ManagementActivities.asp

Next steps

The PMAP is in the final stages of development and will be reviewed by the relevant government agencies before being finalised. The PMAP is expected to be finalised by the end of 2018.

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