



RAAF Base Williamtown

Revised PFAS Management Area Plan and updated Ongoing Monitoring Plan

Overview

In October 2018, Defence completed a detailed, three-year environmental investigation into per-and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination on and around RAAF Base Williamtown.

PFAS is mostly concentrated in areas where firefighting foams were previously used or stored on base. These are called source areas. The PFAS sticks to soil in these areas and gradually moves from the soil into groundwater and surface water. PFAS then migrates from these source areas by flowing through drains, or more slowly via groundwater.

Eight source areas were found on the base where PFAS concentrations required further study or action. To date, more than 14,000 tonnes of PFAS contaminated soil has been excavated from the source areas, and more than 4.4 billion litres of groundwater has been pumped and treated.

PFAS contamination from RAAF Base Williamtown is a significant issue for the local community. Defence remains committed to working with the New South Wales (NSW) Government to manage risks associated with the contamination.

Groundwater Strategy Review

The Groundwater Strategy Review was completed in October 2022. This review evaluated the effectiveness of remediation works to date and considered improvements.

Defence engaged international and local remediation experts to independently undertake the review. Technical assessments, including groundwater modelling were undertaken to assess and optimise the effectiveness of existing and proposed PFAS management actions

The findings and recommended actions from the review are outlined in the updated PFAS Management Area Plan.

Revised PFAS Management Area Plan

The PFAS Management Area Plan for RAAF Base Williamtown is now updated and is available to view on the Defence website.

The plan sets out Defence's activities to manage the risks of PFAS contamination on and around the base. The following new actions are currently underway:

- on-base groundwater extraction and treatment in the Western Region
- design and planning for off-base groundwater extraction and treatment in the Central Region
- Moors Drain catchment data gap assessment within the Eastern Region to inform the design of the Moors Drain pumping and treatment system upgrade.



Image: Installation of an on-base groundwater extraction wellfield in the Western Region – September 2023.



Updated Ongoing Monitoring Plan

The PFAS Ongoing Monitoring Plan for RAAF Base Williamtown is now updated and is available to view on the Defence website.

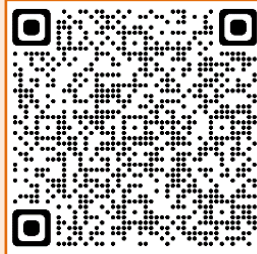
Defence consulted with the NSW Environmental Protection Authority, NSW Technical Advisory Group and Hunter Water Corporation in reviewing the plan. The review recommended retaining, removing, and adding sampling locations.

As new remediation actions get underway, Defence will include monitoring to assess their effectiveness.

Read the revised PFAS Management Area Plan and updated Ongoing Monitoring Plan

The revised PFAS Management Area Plan and updated Ongoing Monitoring Plan are available on the Defence website. Access it via the QR code or visit:

www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/pfas/pfas-management-sites/raaf-base-williamtown



Next steps

Over the next 12-18 months, Defence will:

- hold a Community Consultative Session in early 2024 to present the revised PFAS Management Area Plan and updated Ongoing Monitoring Plan
- finish installation of the western plume groundwater extraction and treatment system
- install the off-base groundwater extraction and treatment system
- further investigate the Moors Drain catchment to optimise the Moors Drain water treatment system
- publish the 2022 Ongoing Monitoring Report with latest sampling findings
- continue monitoring on and around RAAF Base Williamtown, with the next sampling to occur in February 2024.

Keeping you informed

Defence will continue to keep the community informed about the management and ongoing monitoring of PFAS on and around RAAF Base Williamtown.

Learn more

To learn more about Defence's PFAS Investigation and Management Program visit www.defence.gov.au/pfas

Alternatively, you can contact:



1800 011 443



pfas.enquiry@defence.gov.au



Media enquiries

Media enquiries should be directed to the Defence Media Centre on (02) 6217 1999 or via email at media@defence.gov.au

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