



Community Information Session

RAAF Base Williamtown

PFAS Investigation and Management Program update

Thursday 5 December 2024





Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the **Worimi** people as the traditional custodians of the land we meet on today.

Defence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. Defence recognises their continuing connection to traditional lands and waters and would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

Defence would also like to pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have contributed to the defence of Australia in times of peace and war.





Agenda



PFAS Independent Review

Program update for RAAF Williamtown

- Remediation progress
- Ongoing monitoring update
- Next steps

Questions



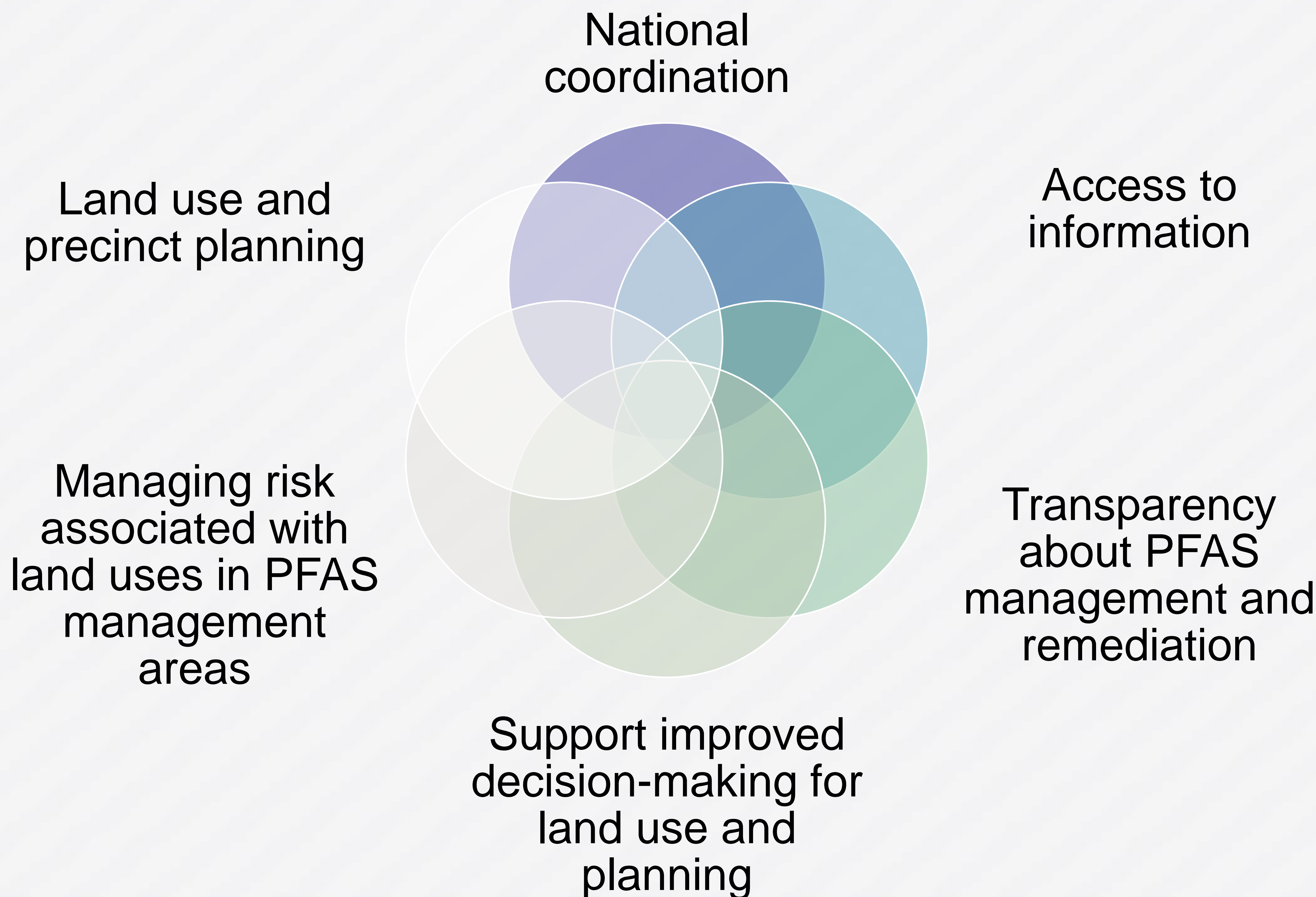
PFAS Independent Review

- The Review focussed on communities near Swartz Barracks in Oakey QLD, RAAF Base Tindal in Katherine NT and RAAF Base Williamtown.
- The Review report was submitted to Government in April 2024.
- The Government has agreed or agreed in-principle to 18 of the 19 recommendations, with one recommendation noted.

**Independent Review of
land uses around key
Defence bases impacted
by PFAS contamination**



PFAS Independent Review





Agreed recommendations

National coordination (Recommendation 1)

- The Government agrees to take immediate action to strengthen coordination and integration of the response to PFAS contamination across and between the Commonwealth, state / territory and local governments.



Agreed recommendations

Access to information (Recommendations 2-4)

- The Government agrees on the need for collaboration across all levels of government to improve the availability of credible, relevant and up-to-date information on the impacts of PFAS contamination, assist in addressing community concerns and enable existing land uses.
- The Government agrees to provide tailored information for property owners and communities, including First Nations communities.
- The Government agrees that Defence will continue to offer additional sampling to property owners on request, and develop clear English advice on the sampling results relevant to property owner circumstances.



Agreed recommendations

Transparency about PFAS management and remediation (Recommendations 5-8)

- The Government agrees that the National Coordinating Body will consider options to mitigate the unintended consequences of establishing PFAS Management Areas and zones.
- The Government, through Defence, will confirm if the human health risk assessments remain current and re-assess the suitability of the PFAS Management Areas (where defined by Defence) to support management responses and facilitate the re-assessment of Management Areas set by the states or territories.



Agreed recommendations

Principles to support improved decision-making for land use and planning (Recommendations 9 and 10)

- The Government acknowledges that state / territory and local governments control land planning and development relevant to historical contamination across their jurisdictions.
- The Government agrees to work with states and territories planning ministers to consider the need to update national guidance to address situations where PFAS has migrated across jurisdictional boundaries. National guidance will be developed together with the states / territories and local government.
- The Government agrees that the National Coordinating Body consider the merit of providing further national guidance regarding recording contamination on property titles, including to improve consistency across jurisdictions.



Agreed and agreed in-principle recommendations

Managing risk associated with land uses in PFAS Management Areas (Recommendations 11-15)

- The Government is committed to working with the states and territories through the National Coordinating Body to address the need for improved policy guidance that can inform the assessment of risks associated with food production in the context of PFAS contamination.
- The Government will engage with the NSW Government through the National Coordinating Body on the appointment of an independent assessor to review the PFAS exposure for properties within the RAAF Base Williamtown Primary Management Zone.



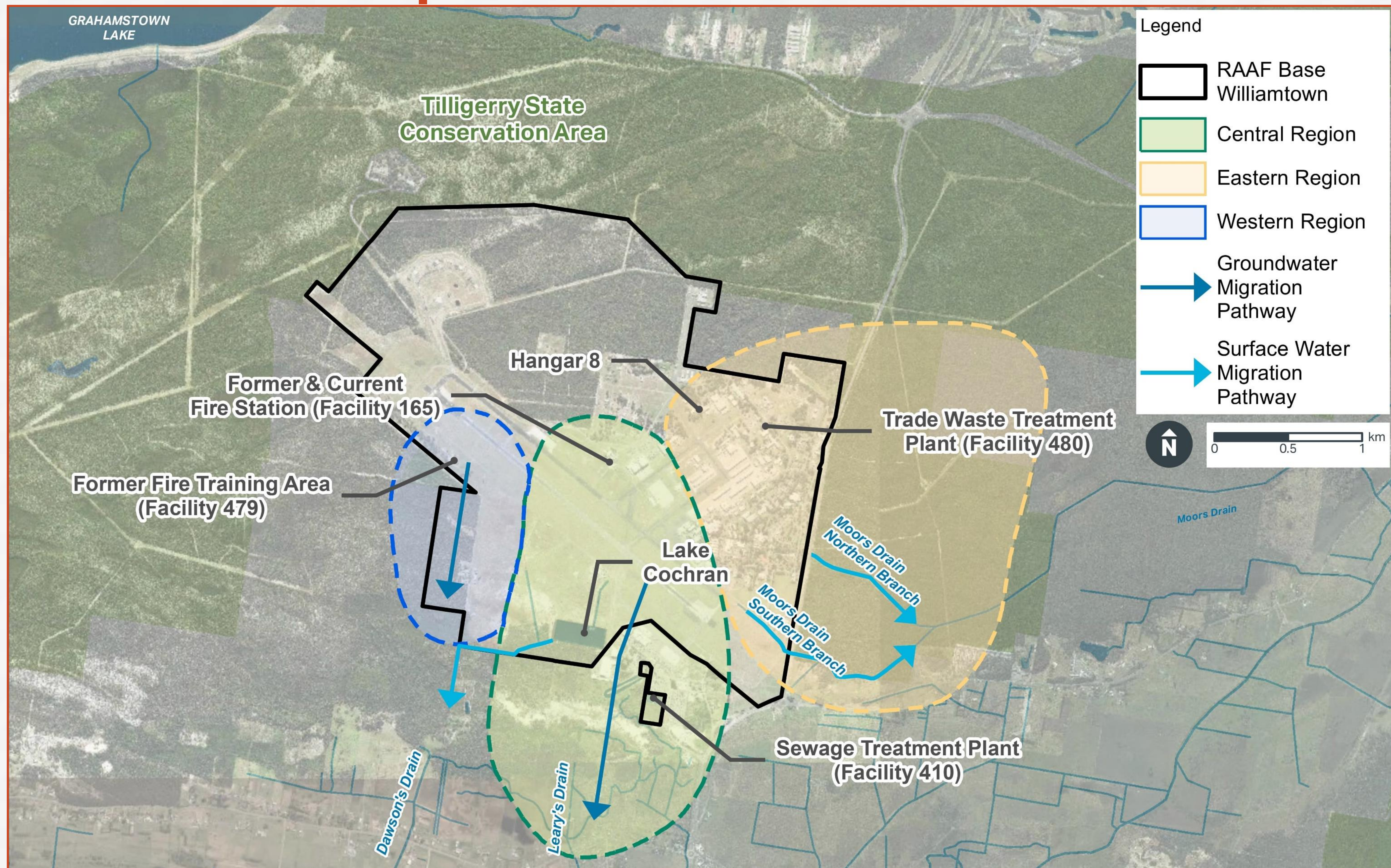
Agreed, agreed in-principle and noted recommendations

Re-purposing land for development (Recommendations 16 – 19)

- The Government acknowledges that state / territory and local governments control land planning and development in their jurisdictions.
- The Government will work with states / territories and local government through the National Coordinating Body to support the development of principles and guidance for land planning in the context of PFAS contamination as part of an agreed future program of work.
- The Government will establish a Williamtown Working Group to inform a range of actions to mitigate PFAS contamination in the Williamtown PFAS Management Area and will also seek First Nations input.



Remediation update





Western region remediation update

41 kg of PFAS removed by:

- Treating over 1.6 billion litres of impacted groundwater.
- Excavating 10,800 tonnes of soil.

Upcoming actions:

- Once commissioned, southern boundary groundwater extraction wellfield should reduce amount of PFAS by 90%.



Western Region Water Treatment Plant



Soil excavation from former fire training area



Southern boundary groundwater extraction wellfield



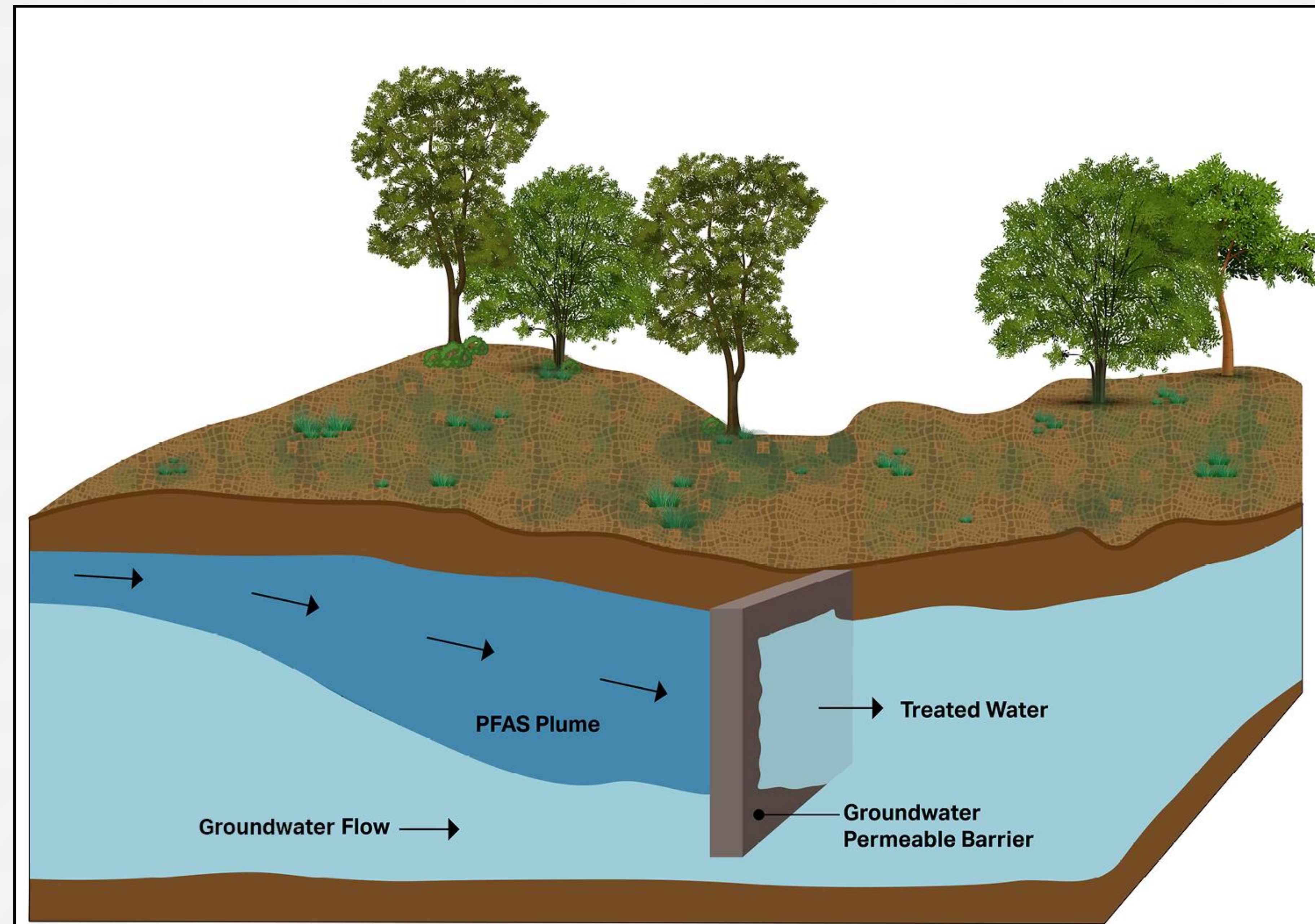
Central region remediation update

28 kg of PFAS removed by

- Treating over 2 billion litres of impacted groundwater.
- Excavating 2,200 tonnes of soil.

Upcoming actions

- Groundwater Permeable Reactive Barrier Trial.
- Further investigation to understand source of PFAS into Dawson's Drain.

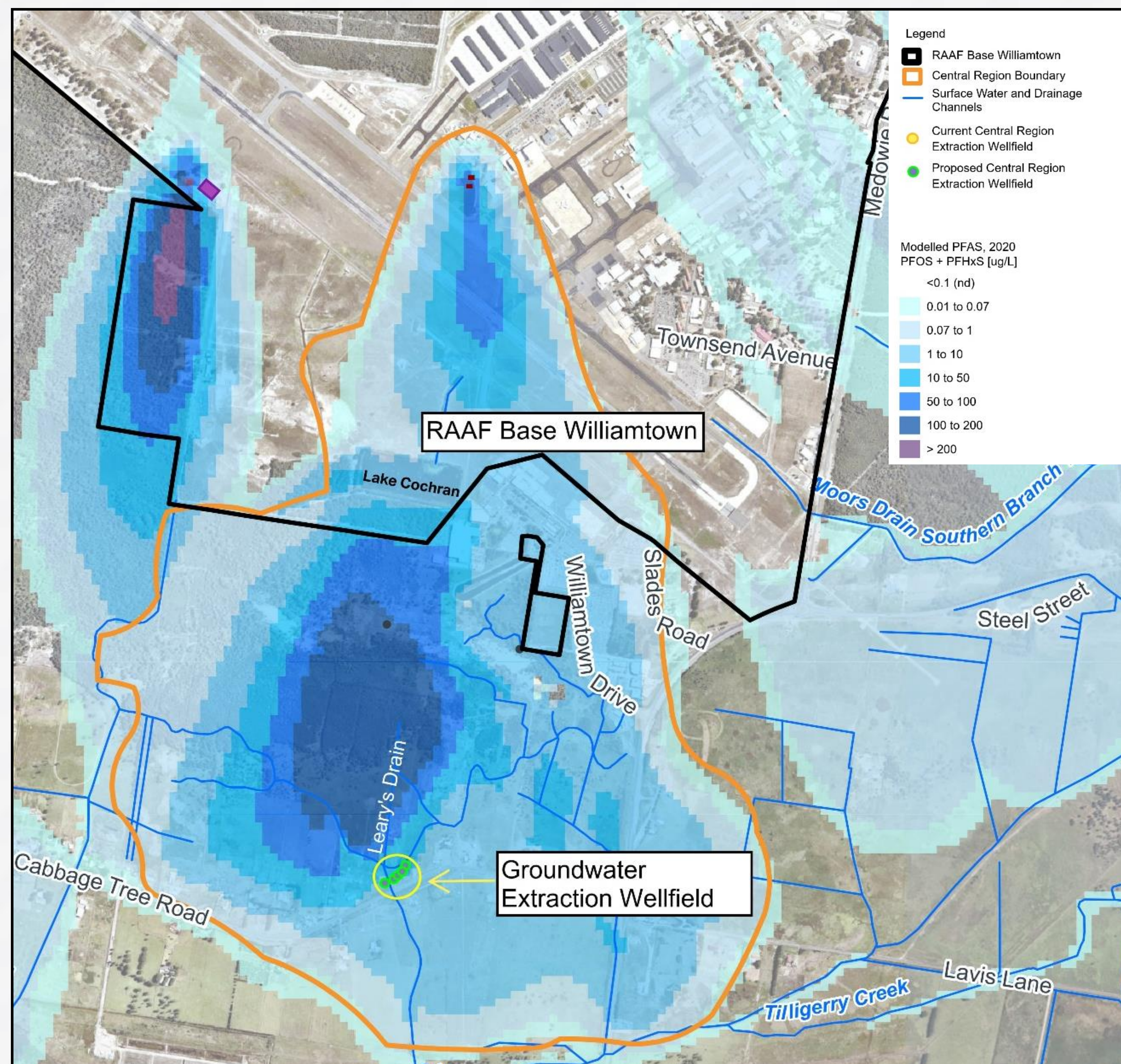




Central region remediation update

Upcoming action

- Groundwater extraction system to be installed off base in the NSW EPA Primary Management Zone.





Eastern region remediation update

3 kg of PFAS removed by

- Treating over 760 million litres of water from Moors Drain.



Moors Drain Water Treatment Plant

Upcoming action

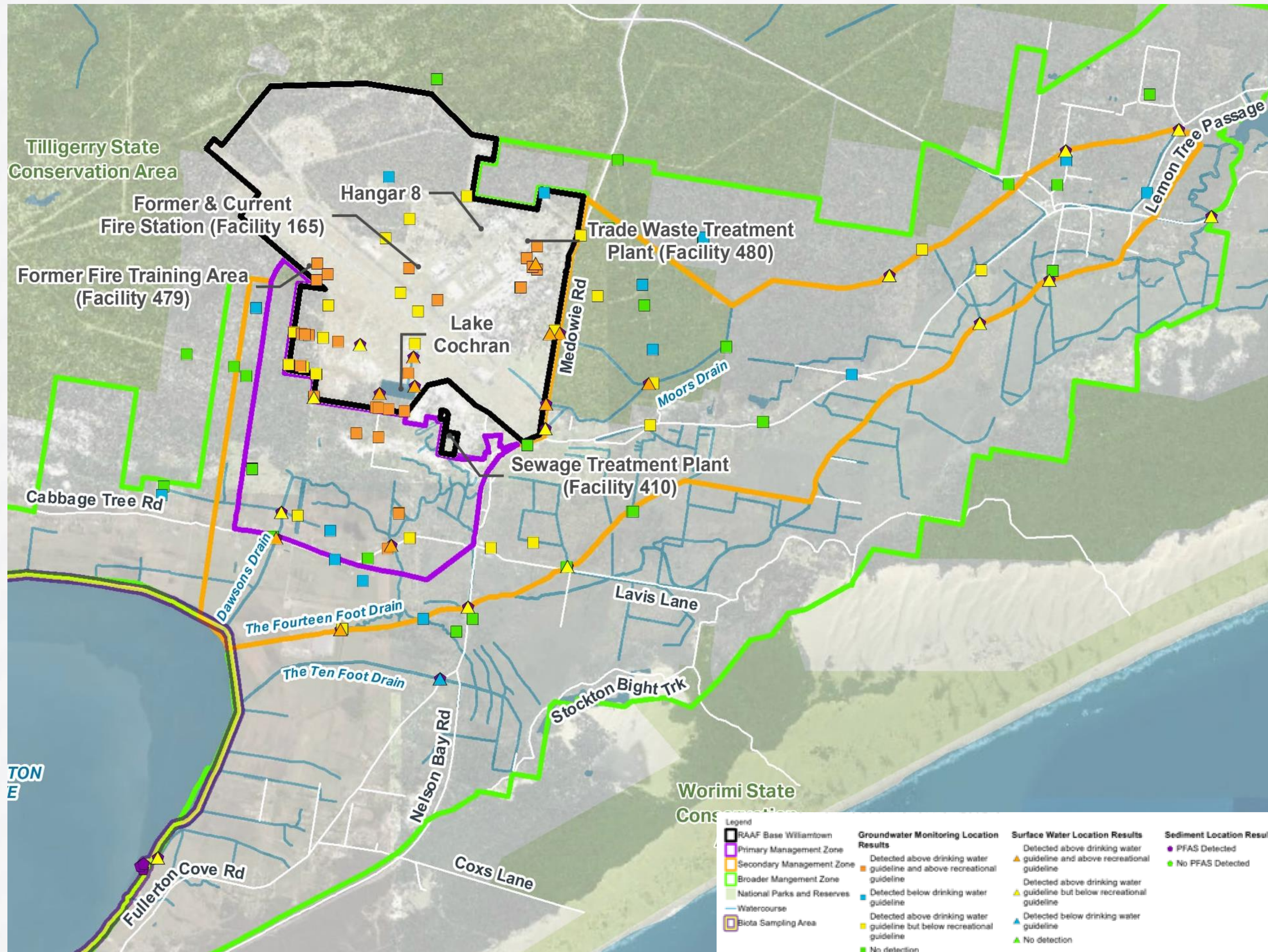
- Further investigate the surface water drainage to see if any modifications are required to the Moors Drain water treatment plant.



RAAF Base Williamtown drainage network



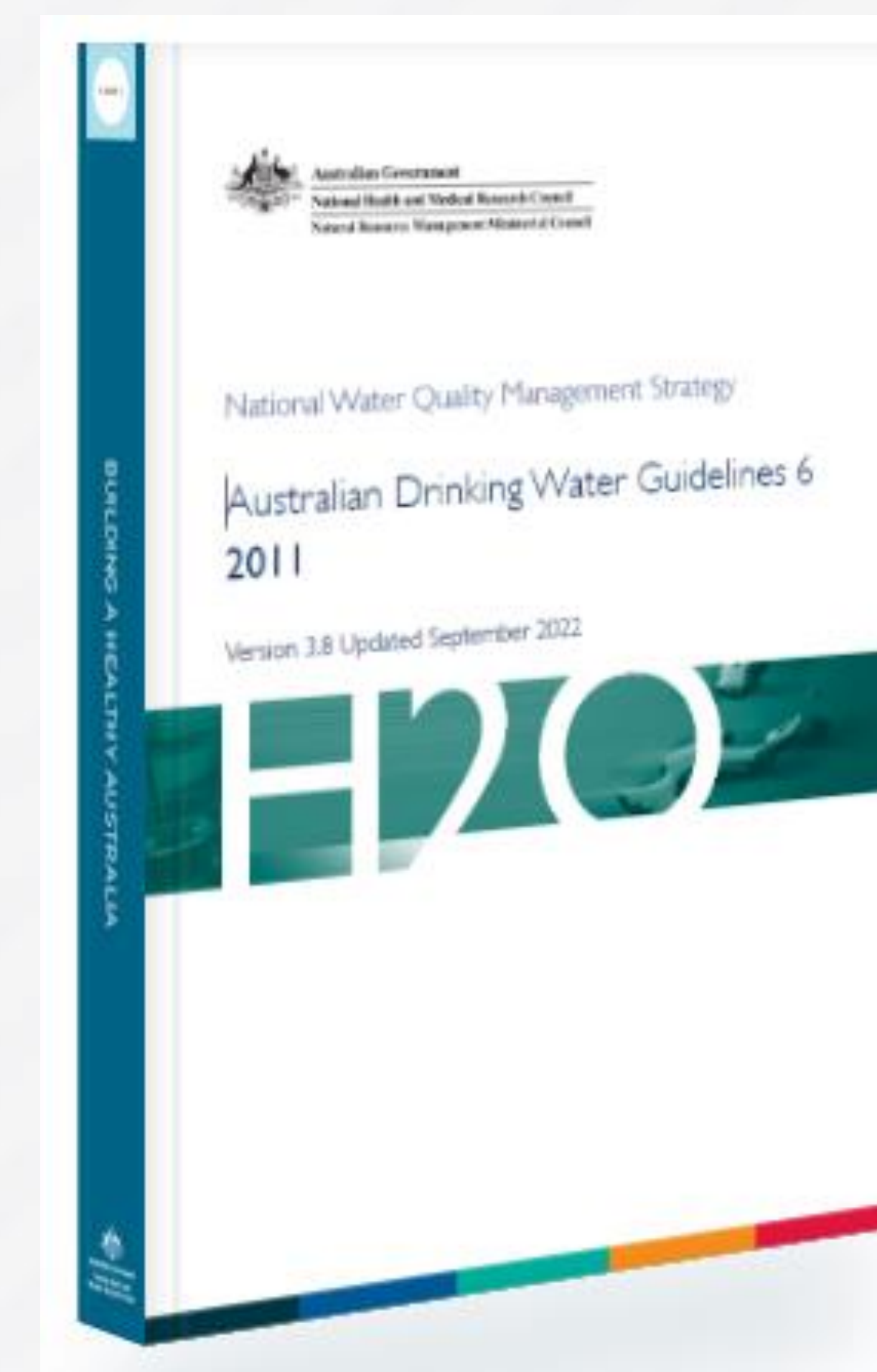
Recent ongoing monitoring results



- Four rounds of sampling undertaken since last information session.
- Extent of groundwater plumes largely unchanged.
- PFAS concentrations are beginning to stabilise or decrease at remediated areas on base.
- Potential exposure risks to people within the management area remain unchanged.
- NSW Government precautionary advice remains in place.



Australian Drinking Water Guidelines





Next steps

Install and commission new remediation activities.



Next sampling scheduled May 2025.



Continue to keep the community informed.





Support



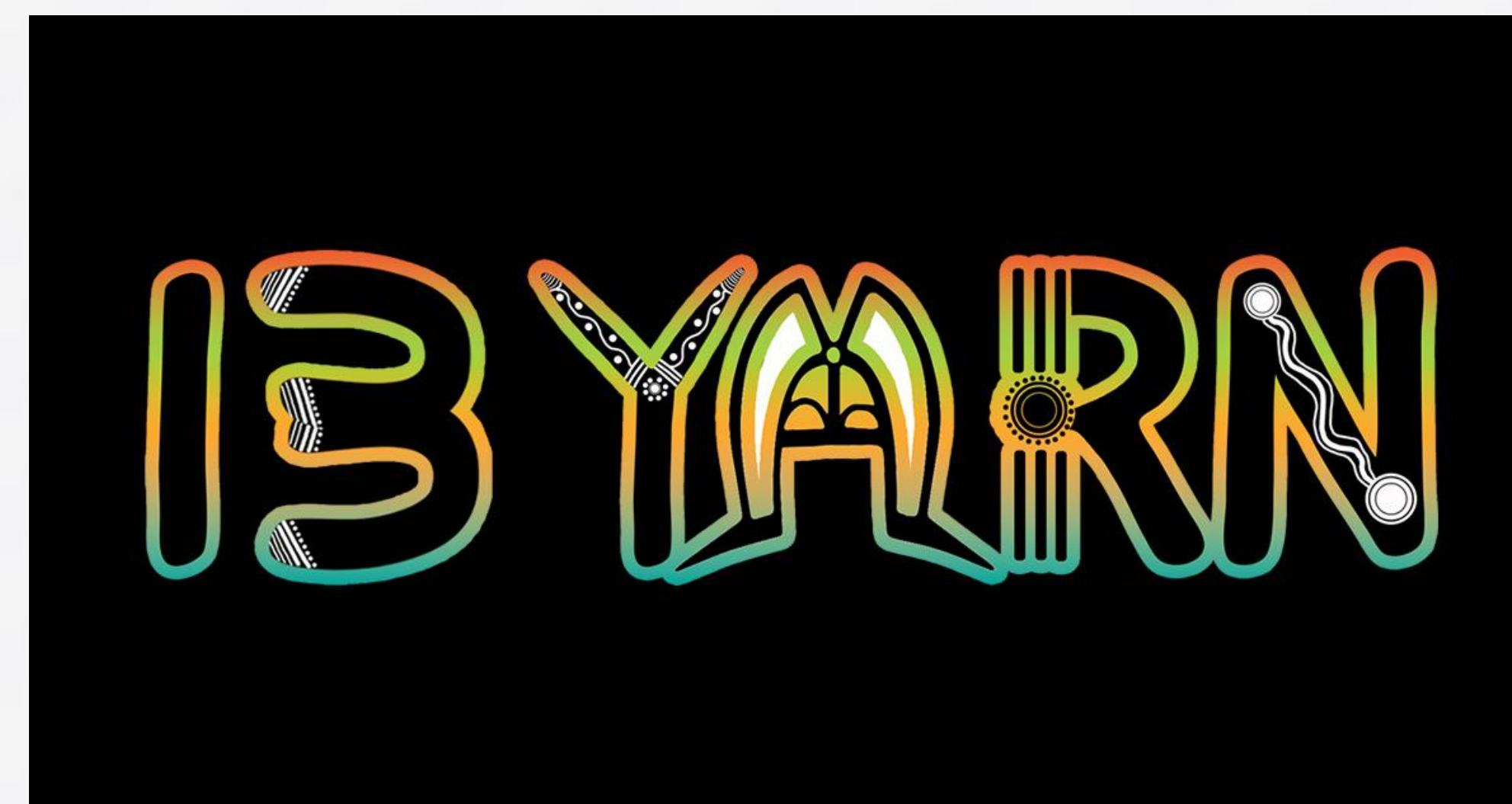
Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs





Questions



Contact us



Phone: 1800 011 443



Email: williamtown.defence@aecom.com



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

