

5 December, 2015

**RE: CONTAMINATION OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE FACILITIES  
AND OTHER COMMONWEALTH, state and territories sites Australia**

**RE: WILLIAMTOWN BASE**

I have lived in Williamtown for approximately fourteen years. It is a life-style that I have enjoyed. We have a small acreage of around eight acres. We have animals, chickens and grow some of our own vegetables.

We first found out about the contamination from friends who read it in the newspaper. It was several days before we received information about this from the Health department and the EPA.

We were told not to drink bore water or eat our eggs but that vegetables were safe as long as they were washed in town water first.

Our soil, bore or surface water has not been tested but we have a near neighbour that has got a high reading for PFOS and PFOA. Air Vice Marshal, Greg Evans said that we did not need to have testing as Defence was doing tests at predetermined sites with a view to how far the contamination had spread.

We were at a Tomago meeting where a RAAF representative said that Defence was the polluter and Defence will pay. Pay what? If we get sick or die is that when they will pay?

Council is already putting on the 149 Certificates that the land in what is called the Red Zone is contaminated land. Our land is now worthless as Real Estate agents will not list it and the banks will not lend for Home Loans in the Red Zone.

So in short, we have a valueless property, can't eat our eggs, too scared to eat our vegetables, worry for the health of ourselves, neighbours and animals, people in the area are depressed, stressed and financially out of pocket and all this without any answers about what our future holds.

Council and the EPA knew of the contamination in 2012 but we did not find out until late 2015. Defence knew in 2002 that the Fire Fighting Foam was toxic but continued to use it until 2008. Defence knew that it had contaminated the land and water and was also found to have leached outside of the base lands but made no attempt to contain it. The fact is that Defence allowed major works to continue on and around the base. One such major work was the placing of sewer pipes. This required the area to be dewatered using spears

and the runoff water then flooded part of our property as the line follows our boundary fence. What contamination has been caused to the soil on our property?

There has been no attempt by Defence to contain the PFOA and PFOS or to stop further contamination leaving the base.

We worry that if residents in the Red Zone were forced to relocate to an area that was not contaminated that there is only limited land available and this would be driven up in price due to the lack of availability with many forced to relocate to other areas away from family and friends.

This situation that we find ourselves in, through no fault of our own, has disrupted our lives. We have been forced to try to find answers as a community as we are not being adequately informed by any other means. At every community meeting we have been reminded to treat the RAAF with respect and we have done this. I believe that the Defence should reciprocate this and become a good neighbour and show us the same respect. If we were respected we would not have so many questions unanswered and we would know of plans to deal with the situation we find ourselves in.

Yours faithfully

Jancice Robinson