

Defence Portfolio

INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.)

Senator Ross Cadell asked the Department of Defence the following question, during the Public Hearing on 5 September 2025:

Senator CADELL: That medical funding came from the Defence budget. How much would you have spent on PFAS overall so far, both on health and overall?

Ms Perkins: We've certainly covered this at previous hearings. I'll give you a headline, and I'm happy to take on notice the more detailed numbers. From the 2015-16 budget to the current-year budget, we've had an allocation that now, I believe, totals \$817 million. That's over 10 years. As we started in the investigation program, a lot of that was scientific investigation and support for research. We can provide a breakdown of where some of that, particularly the research funding, has gone. In more recent years, we've transitioned to, as we've talked about, the remediation program—so soil remediation onsite and the work we've done to transition firefighting foams in fixed establishments. Collectively, that body of activity has been \$817 million over the last decade.

Defence provides the following answer:

As of 30 June 2025, Defence has invested \$817 million to investigate, manage and remediate per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on and around the Defence estate. Separately, in 2017 Defence contributed funding to the:

- Australian Research Council for the PFAS Remediation Research Program, totalling \$13 million; and
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (including the National Health and Medical Research Council) for programs totalling \$32.27 million for:
 - ANU PFAS Health Study, including the Voluntary Blood Testing Program;
 - Community mental health support in Williamstown, Oakey and Katherine; and
 - National Health and Medical Research Council Targeted Call for Research into PFAS.