

Submission of Michele Sansom

Inquiry: The management of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in and around Defence bases.

I wish to inform you of how the contamination of land surrounding Williamtown RAAF Base (the Red Zone) has affected me and my family.

Having lived in Salt Ash and Williamtown for the majority of my life, being from the third generation of Sansoms who have lived in this area, I am extremely upset that the land where I grew up and have an emotional attachment to is now a contaminated wasteland, due to the carelessness of the RAAF Base in not taking heed of safety instructions to keep these chemicals isolated from the underground water table.

In relation to the cover up I feel betrayed, angry and helpless. The people and departments responsible for withholding information need to be held accountable and made an example of.

My mother [REDACTED] lived on Sansom Road until she became too ill to live at home anymore. It became necessary to move her to an aged care facility. We could not use her house (now worthless) as the bond required by the nursing home so money was taken from her savings to cover her costs. My mother passed away in mid April, at the age of 93, she spent the last years of her life worried about her home becoming worthless, her money being eaten up by nursing home fees and the drastic decline of the value of her Estate for her family members. This should not be how the last three years of an elderly person's life should be spent.

I also lived on Sansom Road for approximately 30 years where I raised my three daughters I have concerns and fears for their future health as we ate vegetables from our garden and eggs from our chooks. We would turn the sprinklers on spraying underground water all over our children on hot days these memories are now very worrying, realising that you were unknowingly covering your children with toxic chemicals. What should be pleasant memories have now been contaminated as well, with worry.

I have had many sleepless nights worrying about what the future holds for me and my family as well as all of the other affected residence, who each have their own stories about this nightmare.

I urge the members of this inquiry to come to the conclusion that the property owners of the Red Zone need to be compensated for their financial losses NOW so that they can have the freedom to move on with their lives.

Also monitoring of the RAAF Bases attempts to clean up the contamination by an outside body needs to be introduced as you see all trust is gone.

Yours Sincerely

Michele Sansom.