

Written questions on notice from Senator Thorpe

1. Have you engaged with the government on the potential to employ blood and plasma donations more widely for PFAS affected populations? Has there been any interest in this or how has government responded?

Yes, we have on numerous occasions either via past Senate Select Committees, Deputy minister for Defence, who passed me onto DCCEEW, who passed me onto to Health Minister Bowen, regarding therapeutic plasma/blood donations, who eventually then referred me back to Dept of Defence Ministers office, who then referred me back to DCCEEW. DCCEEW high level representatives have also been fully briefed on not only FRV's Plasma/Blood Treatment at the numerous side events and presentations I have given at the UN Stockholm Convention. Unfortunately there still hasn't been any meaningful response.

2. PFAS was not supposed to be a part of A class foams. However, you recently tested your A Class High Expansion foam stocks and they tested positive for PFAS. **Correct.**
 - a. Have you contacted Chubb Fire and Security, whom the foams were purchased from, about this? **Yes, who after denying this could be the outcome, they performed their own independent testing, which led to them taking back all of our High Expansion foam stocks to be destroyed. FRV replaced our High Expansion Foam stocks with a foam product from another company after conducting our own independent testing to ensure it was PFAS Free.**
 - b. Does this mean PFAS contamination could have occurred at locations that have previously not been considered as contaminated as different foams were used? **Yes.**
 - c. Are A class foams used in fighting bushfires? **Yes, that's why its incumbent on all end users to conduct their own testing as manufacturers cannot be trusted.**
3. Fire Rescue Victoria, in its submission to the inquiry, has called for a federal ban on the use of any PFAS containing firefighting foam and I believe you have repeatedly engaged with the government around this. Can you tell us about the government response to this request? **I have repeatedly engaged with DEECCW officials at the UN Stockholm Convention and via Senate Inquiries, the PFAS Expert Panel, Victoria WorkSafe and Victoria EPA and their various CEO's and Ministers over the years, and I'm still waiting for this to occur.**
4. In your submission you also mention that there has been a lack of support from the government and FRV have been forced to implement a lot of policies and procedures to protect firefighters on their own. What would effective support from the government to firefighters look like? **Meaningful, and achievable, solutions focussed legislation that protects firefighters, the community and the environment. There is a lack of knowledge from the regulators regarding PFAS and because it effects so many Government portfolios, decisions don't get made. A Government sponsored panel of advisory committee focussing on achievable and practical solutions that includes end users that could be a worthwhile exercise. There are not only fire services, but also companies that actually want to do the right thing and commence remediation work, however there is no organisation that can advise or provide assistance in what they need to do. That's why I receive calls most weeks from companies and institutions**

from not only Australia, but from all over the world, about our PFAS mitigations initiatives.

Additionally, the number of cancers covered by Presumptive Legislation varies across jurisdictions, these protections need standardisation. If one state or territory, based on evidence accepts the adding of additional cancer coverage, then it should automatically roll onto all jurisdictions.

PFOS and PFOA have been classified as carcinogenic by the WHO however the Australian Health Authorities still say there is not any evidence of it causing harm to human health. If there is no harm to human health, why are federal agencies providing drinking water to effected communities, why are there PFAS Thresholds in the NEMP, why does the NEMP even exist and why are drinking water standards for PFAS even a thing? Why are regulators enforcing remediation and issuing advisory notices to not consume fish and seafood from PFAS contaminated waterways if PFAS exposure is safe?

a. You also stated challenges in dealing with state environmental agencies.

What were the challenges and how can they be overcome? The challenges from Vic EPA are too numerous to explain in this document, but I feel it's due to their lack of knowledge regarding PFAS and their lack of experience in looking at practical solutions. EPA is a regulator that is used to enforcing regulations where as firefighters are trained in helping people when they are at their most vulnerable, identifying risk and quickly employing strategies and tactics to remove or reduce that risk.

Two examples of my frustrations with EPA is when FRV provided them with Detailed Site Investigation Report (DSI) from one of our fire station sites, the EPA response was question the validity of the soil samples as there was no evidence that the soil samples were transported to the laboratory in a refrigerated container. Firstly there was a attached chain of custody document outlining this, but it would be immaterial anyway as we weren't collecting chicken breast samples, we were collecting soil samples to test for FOREVER CHEMICALS!!

The other example was at a recent meeting where we were discussing the Offsite PFAS Contamination to a neighbouring private residential property, that was caused by the historical use of firefighting foam by CFA, which FRV is now responsible for. Because we informed the owner that there was contamination on their property and we wanted to remediate their property, we had provide the owners with all the testing results and reports. Because FRV and provided this information to the owners, the owners now had knowledge of the contamination of their property and legally they were required to manage this contamination under the Duty To Manage provisions of the EPA General Environmental Duties. Obviously my response to the suggestion that contamination caused by one government statutory authority (CFA), now being the responsibility of another government statutory authority (FRV), and the regulator wanting to enforce the duty to manage the contamination and remediation on the VICTIM, was quite robust and not very flattering to those EPAS representatives in attendance.

5. Mr Tisbury, you have recently presented the case for the need to move away from PFAS containing firefighting foams at the UN. What was the response? The UN Stockholm Convention has added PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS to either Annex A

or B of the Stockholm Convention. Australian representatives have voted and agreed over the past 10 years with these listings, including the recommendations to avoid regrettable substitutions. However, Australia, despite being signatories to the Stockholm Convention, have still not ratified these resolutions. Unfortunately, this year, the Republic of Korea requested an extension to continue to PFOS containing firefighting foam, which they had voted to stop using 10 years ago, for another 5 years as they had not transitioned away from these products. I argued furiously against this request and was supported by the UN Human Rights Commission; however, the request was eventually accepted. I will note that Australia along with Canada and Singapore, whilst supportive of my position, were unable to vote due to all 3 countries were in caretaker mode due to their respected elections.