

MEDIA RELEASE

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Parafield Airport PFAS update

A survey is underway to determine the use of groundwater extraction bores on properties adjacent the airport, in relation to the historical use of fire-fighting foam containing PFAS on the airport by a number of former Commonwealth agencies until 1986, after which time this service was provided externally by the local municipal fire service.

Per- and poly- fluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) are manufactured chemicals used to make products resistant to heat, stains, grease and water. They have been widely used in many consumer and industrial products, including carpet, cookware, clothing, food packaging, pesticides, stain repellants, fire-fighting foams, mist suppressants and coatings.

Whilst recent investigations on the airport showed PFAS levels within close proximity to the airport boundary were generally low, surveys and further tests will be conducted as a precaution in a small area of Parafield Gardens (200m wide zone adjacent Bardsley Ave) and Mawson Lakes (Bridges Estate only – north of Elder Smith Rd) closest to the airport.

The survey will determine any use of groundwater extraction bores adjacent to the airport in case further environmental investigations are needed to be undertaken.

There are no registered groundwater extraction bores in the areas selected for the survey and the water is considered too salty to drink - however as a precaution the airport is seeking to understand if any unregistered bores are present and in use.

The survey only relates to upper level groundwater extraction. Mains tap water is not impacted. The survey is not relevant to those without a bore on their property.

Fire-fighting training activities at Parafield Airport ceased more than 30 years ago in 1986. Fire-fighting services are now provided externally by the Metropolitan Fire Service.

Parafield Airport has consulted widely with SA's Environment Protection Authority (EPA), SA Health, Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities and the Australian Department of Health as part of its ongoing monitoring.

SA Health advice on bore water states that "In urban settings and where mains water is available, the use of shallow bore water is not recommended."

An independent expert health panel established by the Australian Government concluded in May this year that: "There is mostly limited, or in some cases no evidence, that human exposure to PFAS is linked with human disease."

In addition to the residential survey, groundwater monitoring will be undertaken on council land directly adjacent the airport.

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