



Australian Government

Department of Health

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

STATEMENT BY THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

1 November 2017

Expert Health Panel for Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

An Expert Health Panel has been established to advise the Australian Government on the potential health impacts associated with Per- and Poly-fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) exposure and to identify priority areas for further research.

The Panel's work will also ensure that communities are being provided with up to date and independent information on the potential health effects associated with PFAS exposure.

PFAS have been used since the 1950s in industrial processes, in a range of common household products, and some types of firefighting foams. Their use in firefighting foams has raised some environmental concerns in Australia as PFAS have contaminated sites where the foams have been used, particularly in places close to some Defence Force bases.

The Expert Health Panel terms of reference are to:

- consider the evidence available from both Australian and international scientific research into the potential human health effects of PFAS exposure; and
- consider the views of the public and other stakeholders through an invitation for public written submissions.

The Expert Health Panel will also provide its advice on priority research areas to the National Health and Medical Research Council to inform the \$12.5 million *Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances – National Health Research Program*, which will be delivered as a targeted call for research^[1].

The Panel Members are:

- Professor Nick Buckley (Chair)
- Professor Malcolm Sim
- Dr Ki Douglas
- Professor Alison Jones
- Professor Helen Håkansson (International Representative)

^[1] Announced as part of the 2017-18 Budget and to be administered by the National Health and Medical Research Council as a targeted call for research.

All of the panellists have demonstrated expertise in the fields of environmental health, toxicology, epidemiology and/or public health.

The Panel is inviting submissions from the public, affected communities and other stakeholders to hear their views about the potential health effects of PFAS and priorities for future research.

The public consultation period opened 1 November 2017 and will close on 19 November 2017.

Submissions can be made to the Panel by visiting allenandclarke.com/pfas.

The Panel will provide its advice to the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, in late February 2018. It will be released publicly soon after.

For more information regarding the Expert Health Panel and the public consultation please visit health.gov.au/pfas.

Media contact: Kay McNiece, 0412 132 585