



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PFAS CONTAMINATION IN WATERWAYS AND DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES THROUGHOUT NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

INQUIRY INTO PFAS CONTAMINATION – REPORT TABLED

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11 September 2025

An Upper House select committee established to inquire into and report on PFAS contamination in waterways and drinking water throughout New South Wales has today tabled its report. The committee was established on 25 September 2024 and has held hearings in the Blue Mountains, Newcastle and Wagga Wagga as well as Sydney.

Committee Chair Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC said "Given the science around PFAS 'forever chemicals' is still evolving, it is imperative that the precautionary principle be applied when developing policy to address the risks these chemicals pose to human health and the environment".

The committee made 16 findings and 32 recommendations across a range of areas.

"There was general agreement among committee members that more attention needs to be given by the Government to the rapidly evolving issue of PFAS contamination of our waterways. This report contains strong recommendations to assist the Government in this challenging work and I encourage them to give the utmost consideration to all of them," said Ms Faehrmann.

"Members of the Blue Mountains community made it very clear to the committee that they felt let down by Sydney Water. Hearing that, the committee found that, in claiming there were no known PFAS hotspots within Sydney's drinking water catchment, Sydney Water had not performed an appropriate level of due diligence".

The committee also found that the latest advice on PFAS issued by the NSW Health Expert Advisory Panel on PFAS in August, which is conservative regarding the potential health risks of PFAS and questions the utility of PFAS blood testing, requires further scrutiny.

"The committee heard conflicting evidence on the risks that PFAS poses to human health," Ms Faehrmann stated. "However, the International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified PFOA as carcinogenic, while other evidence stresses the important role that blood testing communities can play. For that reason, the committee believes that the advice NSW Health has issued requires further scrutiny".

"Given the unsettled state of the science, and the need to observe the precautionary principle, the committee has recommended the NSW Government support PFAS blood testing of willing individuals in PFAS-exposed communities," Ms Faehrmann continued.

Other significant recommendations to improve how New South Wales responds to PFAS contamination included the following.

- More regular reviews of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines to ensure that they align with international best practice and are informed by the latest evidence.
- Measures to support New South Wales firefighters – who are at particular risk of PFAS-related disease owing to the historic use of PFAS-containing firefighting foam – including in the areas of workers' compensation and work to determine whether specific guidelines are needed to manage these occupational health risks.

- Inter-jurisdictional work to support the phase-out of all non-essential uses of PFAS in consumer, commercial and industrial products by 2030, and to support mandatory PFAS labelling at the national level.
- An audit of the state's 'high conservation value' and 'slightly to moderately disturbed' freshwater ecosystems to determine those that are not meeting relevant water quality guidelines for PFAS, so that appropriate action can be taken.

In addition, the committee made recommendations aimed at ensuring that where PFAS contamination has originated from Defence sites within the state's borders, the Federal Department of Defence takes responsibility for remediation and ongoing consultation to address impacts to affected communities.

"Defence must take more responsibility for the contamination it has caused in localities such as Wagga Wagga and Williamstown," Ms Faehrmann stated.

Details concerning the inquiry, and a copy of the final report, can be found at [the committee's webpage](#).

For further information please contact Debbie Medaris for Committee Chair, Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC, on 0431 545 205

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