

**Supplementary  
Submission  
No 9a**

**INQUIRY INTO INQUIRY INTO PFAS CONTAMINATION  
IN WATERWAYS AND DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES  
THROUGHOUT NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Mr Paul Rooms and Dr Michael Walton

**Date Received:** 12 January 2025

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**Select Committee on PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water  
Supplies Throughout New South Wales**

**Written Submission**

**Alarming PFAS and PFOA Test Result Beyond the So Called  
Williamtown RAAF Red Zone  
(To be read in conjunction with public submission no. 9)**

**Mr Paul Rooms and Dr Michael Walton  
Pacific Dunes, Medowie, New South Wales**

This submission provides a catastrophic PFAS and PFOA test result from an accredited provider, that is beyond the so called 'Red Zone' surrounding the Australian Federal Government's Williamtown RAAF Base. And also provides the best practice information regarding the latest peer reviewed evidence about the treatment of 'forever chemicals' and the substantial health and economic impact of failing to reasonably act.

Our original Select Committee public submission no. 9, alleged PFAS and PFOA contamination has substantively emanated from the Williamtown RAAF Base and more broadly contamination arising from the long term conduct of Australian Defence operating in and around Williamtown, Campvale, Medowie, Tilligerry Peninsula, Salt Ash, Bobs Farm and Fullerton Cove.

We also stated that since the late 1990s, Mr Paul Rooms had raised his ongoing contamination and water safety concerns with Hunter Water. And over the years with local Federal parliamentary representative, MP The Hon Meryl Swanson, Paterson and State parliamentary representative, MP The Hon Kate Washington, Port Stephens. Ms Washington is also Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion and a senior member of the NSW Labor Government.

We suggested MP Swanson and Minister Washington have failed to reasonably address or take up Mr Rooms' PFAS contamination concerns. We further allege woeful and neglectful conduct of Hunter Water, Newcastle NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Australian Defence.

The PFAS and PFOA test result to be announced in this submission further indicates Hunter Water, Newcastle EPA and Australia Defence can no longer be authorised to independently monitor, test or manage the severity, spread, clean-up, health or economic impacts regarding land, water, food or air contamination from 'forever chemicals' that allegedly emanates from the Williamstown RAAF Base.

We allege they are failed actors, who have a significant conflict of interest that would otherwise ensure the implementation of best practice solutions or protections for the health and wellbeing of adversely impacted Australians and their environment.

Furthermore, we allege such persons and bodies are shameful PFAS apologists, similar to those historical and vested enablers of Big Tobacco, Alcohol, Asbestos, and more recently Caesarstone.

# Terms of Reference



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

## **Inquiry into PFAS contamination in waterways and drinking water supplies throughout New South Wales**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in waterways and drinking water supplies throughout New South Wales, and in particular:
  - (a) the adequacy and extent of monitoring and data collection on PFAS levels in waterways and drinking water sources
  - (b) the adequacy of the reporting and disclosure requirements to the public of monitoring and findings on PFAS contamination of water
  - (c) the identification of communities at risk from PFAS contamination
  - (d) the adequacy and effectiveness of government engagement with and support for communities disproportionately affected by PFAS contamination, including First Nations communities
  - (e) sources of exposure to PFAS, including through historic and current firefighting practices
  - (f) the health, environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of PFAS
  - (g) the impacts, monitoring and mitigation of contamination on livestock, domestic animals and wildlife, including water birds, fish and other aquatic life
  - (h) the structure, capacity, capability and resourcing of New South Wales Government agencies and water utilities to detect, monitor, report on, respond to and mitigate against PFAS contamination of water supplies, including the adequacy of infrastructure and resources
  - (i) the adequacy and effectiveness of New South Wales's legislative and regulatory framework in testing for, monitoring, mitigating and responding to PFAS contamination, including the adequacy of health-based guidance values, as compared to the standards and practices of other Australian and international jurisdictions
  - (j) public sector resourcing and coordination amongst relevant agencies in preventing, controlling and managing the risks of PFAS to human health and the environment
  - (k) international best practices for water treatment and filtration, and the environmentally sound management and safe disposal of PFAS

- (l) the effectiveness of remediation works on specific sites and international best practices for remediation and management of contaminated sites
  - (m) areas for reform, including legislative, regulatory, public health and other policy measures to prevent, control and manage the risks of PFAS in water supplies
  - (n) the impact of taking contaminated water sources offline on water security, including the effects of diverting water between communities; the social, economic and logistical implications of such diversions, and the challenges posed by PFAS contamination to water availability, drought management and emergency supply planning, and
  - (o) any other related matters.
2. That the committee report by 20 June 2025.

## **PFAS and PFOA Test Result - Pacific Dunes**

The result obtained about the level of PFAS and PFOA at Pacific Dunes, Medowie, NSW 2318, indicated a catastrophic and dangerous level of forever chemicals in the water.

Specifically, when comparing the latest freshwater guidelines of <9.1 ng/L water to sample no. 2 of 491 ng/L, it appears to be approximately 54 x greater than is currently recommended in Australia. Notwithstanding, Australia is somewhat a laggard in best practice guidelines for forever chemical levels in water, soil and food, and management thereof. As such, the test result was further independently analysed and interpreted by a leading expert in the field.

This result was more than Mr Rooms and Dr Walton had expected, although other such levels have been found in various hotspots.

We allege this result cannot be minimised or dismissed as a local fire extinguishing exercise or spun by highly paid bureaucrats. And any attempt to do so will result ongoing PFAS and PFOA contamination results being publically reported.

Over the past 12 years, Mr Rooms has developed an expert knowledge of PFAS and PFOA, and is very aware of international best practice and the latest peer reviewed science, and the alleged conduct of Hunter Water or lack thereof.

Photos of frothing water at Pacific Dunes are attached.

































## Development and Removal of Contaminated Soil



📷 Kongsberg Defence and Aerospace Executive vice president missiles and space yvind Kolset, Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery Pat Conroy, Paterson MP Meryl Swanson, Kongsberg Defence Australia general manager John Fry and Newcastle Airport CEO Peter Cock. Picture supplied

Source – Newcastle Herald, 6 December 2024

In light of the published test result at Pacific Dunes, we ask where has the contaminated or treated soil from Williamtown RAAF Base, Newcastle Airport and the industry precinct been removed to. A full investigation needs to be undertaken, including all persons involved and the specifics of their obligations.

It has been widely reported that Pacific Dunes was built in and around swamp. Soil and sand was allegedly trucked in to develop the estate and 18-hole Championship Golf Course, and allegedly still continues, even under the cover of darkness.

As part of a coordinated clean-up of affected areas, reports indicate that PFAS and PFOA contaminated soil was removed from the Williamtown RAAF Base by Newcastle EPA. It is also reported by Australian Defence that PFAS and PFOA contaminated soils were taken to approved EPA landfill sites. Where was this material taken and the total volume transported? How has the removed material been contained? What follow-up testing has occurred to monitor levels and ensure containment of the contamination and that no further disbursement

is occurring into surrounding above and below ground water/soils and or environment?

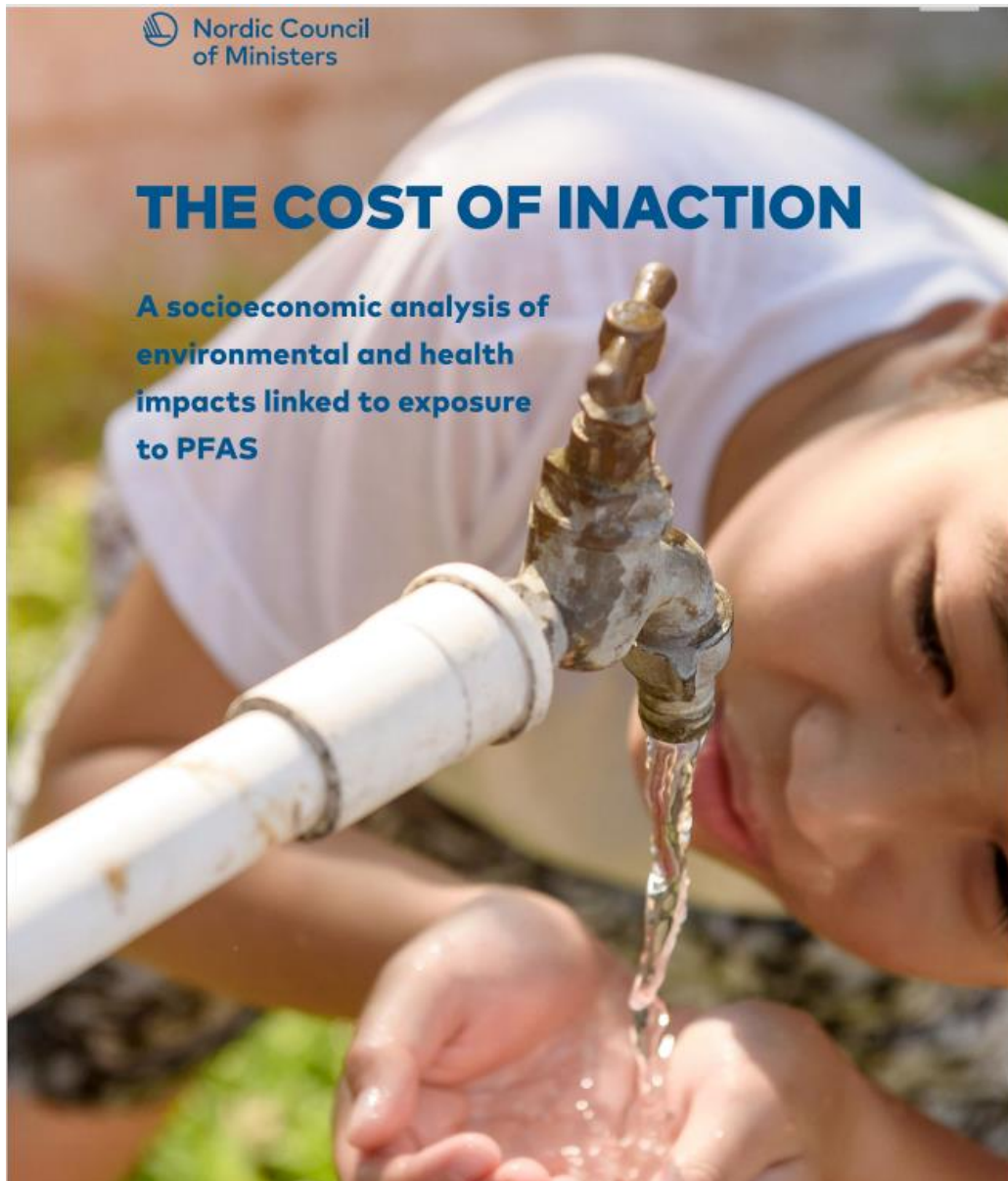
Australian Defence alleges a PFAS and PFOA contamination clean-up spend of \$80 million, for which there reportedly was no significant reduction in recorded levels of forever chemicals. Who obtained these clean-up contracts at Williamtown RAAF Base? How was the money spent? How was the waste treated? Where did Newcastle EPA remove PFAS and PFOA contaminated soils? How was the contaminated waste stored? Has there been subsequent testing and/or monitoring of the disposal sites – surface run off and below ground? And what are the results of any such contamination testing?



## The Cost of Inaction

Nordic Council of Ministers Report (2019). The Cost of Inaction – A socioeconomic analysis of environmental and health impacts linked to exposure to PFAS (194 pages).

<http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1295959&dswid=3627>



Latest research indicates the costs of not limiting the spread of PFAS far outweighs the costs of treating the contamination in the first instance.

We suggest it is imperative to stop the spread of PFAS from above and below ground water, runoff or transport of contaminated soil.

It is estimated to cost the EEU 82 billion euros, if current contamination levels go untreated or are not contained.

Research also found new born babies with low levels of PFAS can be immune compromised to vaccinations such as Polio, Measles, Rubella, Whooping Cough, Covid, for example. PFAS can inhibit the production of healthy antibodies in humans. A new generation of children exposed to PFAS contamination are feared to potentially overwhelm the EEU health systems.

The Federal and NSW State Governments and Australian Defence appear to be inclined to adopt a strategy that “we don’t know enough about the long term impacts”, therefore adopting an indefinite wait and see approach. This also appears to be the approach regarding the health impacts on everyday Australians.

Many of the submissions to the Select Committee seek to draw the problem to other sources of PFAS and PFOA i.e., Teflon pans, carpet, clothing, cosmetics, etc. All correct, except we are not eating Teflon’s pans, our clothes, carpet or drinking moisturiser.

However, publically supplied water is a human necessity and it is vital it contains minimum amounts of PFAS and PFOA as far as technically possible. And ensure local horticulture, agriculture and aquaculture, business and real estate developed in and around PFAS and PFOA contamination, also complies with internationally recognised best practice guidelines. And that the public is fully informed. And it is basic human right to breath air that is free of harmful levels of PFAS and PFOA.

We advocate that Australian Defence should not be relied upon to do PFAS and PFOA testing or be the main organisation to decide upon adopted management measures for PFAS and PFOA levels - including personal health - containment or remediation.

In monitoring the Salt Ash Weapons Range Testing Well no. 13, Australian Defence allegedly had one reading of .49 of PFAS. Similar to the test result levels found at Pacific Dunes. From the publically available data accessed, it appears that no more tests were conducted on the testing of this well, as it was deemed a) dry or b) covered in vegetation and not accessible. It was also suggested that levels found should not be of concern, as readings were likely to be “more in line with nearby sites tested”.

Recent tests obtained allegedly showed a reading of .569 north of the red zone i.e., not far from Well no. 13. Yet Defence maintain there are no significant levels of PFAS and PFOA north of their identified management areas.

Furthermore, we suggest a full investigation is undertaken as to the conduct of Australian Defence, Hunter Water, Newcastle EPA, local political representatives – state and federal, Port Stephens and Newcastle Councils as purported joint owners of Newcastle Airport, regarding the monitoring, containment, clean-up, management of PFAS and PFOA contamination and development, including infrastructure, residential and commercial real estate.

## Cyber Threats

In March 2021, Dr Walton received implied online threats to intimate, harass and harm. Dr Walton requested to have the matter investigated as to the person, persons, party or parties that were involved.

- a) Two online contact forms were sent by Dr Walton to then Prime Minister Scott Morrison on 26 March 2021.

Dear Prime Minister Morrison,

Further to my email contact that was submitted to your office on Friday 26 March 2021 (see below).

Newcastle Herald published two full page commentaries (online and in print) that I had written about Brittany Higgins and the sexual assault of women in Australia. Unauthorised versions of these two articles were soon uploaded onto the Sydney News Today online platform. Please investigate why Federal government adverts (side and banner ads) were featured in both of the online commentaries that were published on Sydney News Today. The adverts clearly picture your face and ask NSW homeowners to check if they qualify for a \$3,700 federal government rebate (see attachment).

The unauthorised versions of my articles uploaded onto the Sydney News Today online platform are damaging. I am distressed that one of the search terms clearly mentions the word "assassination".

I am also concerned that one of the printed search terms for the second unauthorised article published in Sydney News Today, unreasonably includes the word "fraud", which is listed adjacent to the word "Walton". Fraud was never mentioned in anyway whatsoever in the Newcastle Herald article, either online or in print.

Taken together, I am very concerned that I am being cyberbullied as a consequence of my authorship of the Newcastle Herald publications, with the alleged intent to damage, demean, defame, harass, threaten, intimidate and silence.

Please advise whether anyone within the Liberal National Party, government agency or university was associated with uploading the aforementioned commentaries onto the Sydney News Today online platform.

I await a detailed response to my concerns that I have reasonably raised with you.

With thanks,

Michael

Dr Michael Walton

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Submitted on Friday, 26 March, 2021 - 09:50

Title: Dr

First name: Michael

Family name: Walton

Subject: Sydney News Today

Comment:



Dear Prime Minister Morrison,

Please advise whether anyone within the Liberal National Party was associated with uploading onto the Sydney News Today online platform, two of my published commentaries in the Newcastle Herald, which related to Brittany Higgins and the sexual assault of women in Australia. See attached links. The unauthorised versions of the stories that were uploaded on Sydney News Today are damaging and I am distressed that one of the search terms mentions the word assassination. Is my life being threatened?

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7137624/when-self-interest-trumps-moral-decency/>

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7180834/sexual-violence-shouldnt-be-a-fact-of-life-in-our-society/>

<https://sydneynewstoday.com/michael-walton-writes-employees-should-not-feel-that-they-have-to-choose-between-proceeding-with-their-dream-job-or-reporting-to-the-police-who-have-been-sexually-assaulted-newcastle-herald/66261/>

<https://sydneynewstoday.com/michael-walton-writes-tragically-survivors-have-long-experienced-general-indifference-to-sexual-assault-abuse-and-harassment-newcastle-herald/109348/>

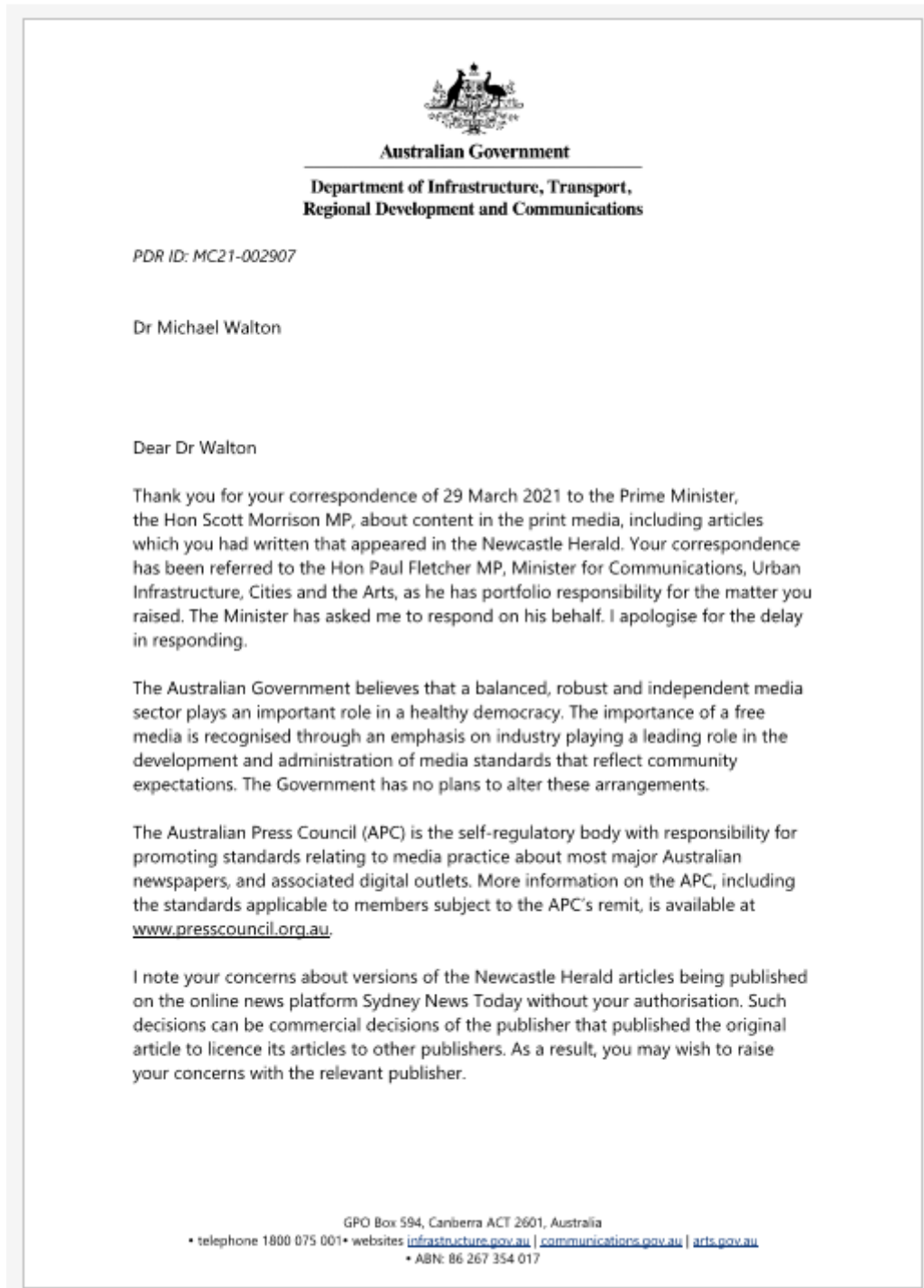
With thanks,

Michael

Dr Michael Walton



- b) Response dated 18 May 2021 to Dr Walton from Mr Jason Potkins, Acting Assistant Secretary - Content and Copyright Branch, Federal Government's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communication.



Further, you could raise your concerns about how your articles are presented on online news platforms, including search terms used for the article, with the platform directly. I do note that the articles appear to have now been removed from Sydney News Today's platform.

Placement of online advertisements are commercial decisions for each online platform, and the Government does not generally get involved in such decisions. If you have concerns, you should raise these concerns with the relevant platform.

Thank you for taking the time to write and I hope you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

Jason Potkins  
Acting Assistant Secretary – Content and Copyright Branch

18 May 2021




- c) On 28 April 2024, Dr Walton sent a detailed email to MP Swanson regarding her forwarding Dr Walton's constituent representation request to the Australian Federal Police about the aforementioned online media threats.

On 15 August 2024, following Dr Walton and Mr Rooms' prompts about Dr Walton not receiving a response from MP Swanson, Dr Walton then belatedly received a three-line email response via her parliamentary office. MP Swanson

declined to advise whether she had knowledge of the online perpetrator/s, whether he, she, they are/were connected either directly or indirectly to the Labor Party or otherwise. Nor would MP Swanson acknowledge, condemn or express any empathy whatsoever for the described conduct to which Dr Walton was subjected.

Seemingly uncaring behaviour toward a constituent and clinical health professional, who had previously received the vote/preferences of Dr Walton and Mr Rooms.

Is it anyone wonder that attacks on frontline professionals are commonplace, entrenched into Australian society and growing.

 Reply  Reply All  Forward




Thu 15/08/2024 1:50 PM

Colman, Linda (M. Swanson, MP)

RE: Re: Constituent Representation Request to the Australian Federal Police

To

 You forwarded this message on 15/08/2024 1:56 PM.

Michael,

Ms Swanson has asked me to respond on her behalf. Please be advised that her office will not be representing this matter to the Australian Federal Police. You are more than welcome to do so yourself of course.

Meryl considers this matter closed on her part.

Regards,  
**Linda Colman**

**Office of Meryl Swanson MP**  
Federal Member for Paterson

W: [merylswanson.com.au](http://merylswanson.com.au)



Dr Walton further alleges that his media profile is continuously manipulated, with published articles and mental health information suppressed. Ongoing cyber bully, harassment and intimidation.

One wonders whether Ms Swanson's alleged inaction related to Mr Rooms and Dr Walton's long term concerns and reporting about PFAS and PFOA in the area.

## Conclusion

Taken together, as we have previously advised to the Select Committee, we allege this matter is an unmitigated and untenable mess for potentially and adversely impacted innocent local residents, families or businesses. And for which we allege that rigorous parliamentary and independent scrutiny is long overdue. In short, it is a catastrophic public policy disaster.

We reiterate that should the Select Committee find any significant corrupt or illegal conduct by a public official or otherwise, then we suggest it is in the public interest the matter be forwarded to the appropriate state and/or federal body for investigation, including criminal proceedings.

We respectfully commend our second detailed written submission to the *Select Committee on PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water Supplies Throughout New South Wales* for its investigation. That is also to be read in conjunction with our Select Committee public submission no. 9.

Please contact us should you require any further information or indicate how we may assist the Select Committee in its work, including attending in person and/or on site.

Mr Paul Rooms

Dr Michael Walton

<https://drmichaelwalton.com.au>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/counselling/michael-walton-lambton-nsw/1269050>

12 January 2025