

PFAS INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP (PFCIWG)

Terms of Reference (as at 22 May 2017)

1. Purpose

Background

Per- and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances (PFASs) have been used in a wide variety of industrial and commercial products, including textiles, food packaging, inks, paints, sealants, floor waxes, cleaning products, pesticides and fire-fighting foams.

These chemicals have been identified worldwide as emerging contaminants of concern due to their toxicity, highly persistent nature, mobility in the environment and significant potential for bioaccumulation and biomagnification.

The Per- and Poly-Fluorinated Alkyl Substances Interagency Working Group (PFASIWG) has been assembled as a response to community concerns from emerging contamination issues associated with the historical use of PFASs and an expectation from Government and the community that further actions be taken to address these concerns in the Northern Territory (NT).

Role and Function

The major role of the PFAIWIWG is to develop and implement a strategy that will be used to: identify and investigate locations where PFASs have been historically used in the NT; determine the level of contamination of the environment from historical usage; determine any current storage of products containing PFASs; and to take further appropriate action to minimise environmental and human health exposure risks.

Selected members of the PFAIWIWG will undertake follow up investigations; determine the management measure(s) to employ on high risk sites; and provide a mechanism to communicate its work to stakeholders and the broader NT community.

Tasks for the PFAIWIWG will include but not limited to:

- a) Development and finalisation a PFAS legacy site investigation strategy for the NT (the strategy) by using the NSW EPA Perfluorinated Legacy Site Investigation template and Decision Tree.
- b) Allocation of areas of the strategy to members of the working group to populate the strategy's requirements in a purposely designed template insofar as it is relevant to the NT i.e. category 1-4 site tasks.
- c) Develop a secure centralised repository where information from allocated tasks where progress of all assessments and investigations are recorded.
- d) Through appropriate Agencies undertake desktop assessments of identified key sites.
- e) Through appropriate Agencies undertake inspections and screening sampling using the screening decision tree to prioritise sites.

- f) Further investigations to be developed and undertaken on prioritised sites based on the screening samples and in line with the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure 1999.
- g) Develop management responses on sites based on the results of further investigations undertaken.
- h) Provide a centralised forum for the dissemination of information and communication between members and to relevant stakeholders.
- i) Develop guidance documents and fact sheets.

2. Term

The Terms of Reference are effective from 10 June 2016 and will be ongoing until terminated by agreement by members.

3. Membership

The PFASIWG will comprise of senior officers from the following:

- NT Environment Protection Authority
- NT Department of Health
- NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (NT WorkSafe)
- NT Department of Primary Industry and Resources
- NT Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services
- Northern Territory Airports Pty Ltd (Darwin International Airport)
- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (Commonwealth)
- Air Services Australia
- SADFO – RAAF Base Tindal
- SADFO – RAAF Base Darwin
- Department of the Chief Minister
- Department of Defence
- Power and Water Corporation
- NT Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

It is expected that the senior officers will be able to make decisions on behalf of their agency/organisation.

This membership may change over time and others may be invited to attend as necessary.

Detail of membership is included at Schedule 1 which may be amended at any time by the co- Chairs.

4. Roles and Responsibilities (rules of engagement)

The inter agency working group will:

- foster collaboration.
- remove obstacles to the PFASIWG successful delivery of tasks.
- commit resources to the tasks of the PFASIWG.
- take responsibility for the outcomes of the PFASIWG.
- share all communications and information across all members where suitable.
- make timely decisions and take action so as to not hold up the process.
- be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner.
- be given reasonable time to make key decisions.
- be alerted to potential risks and issues that could impact the PFASIWG tasks, as they arise.
- undertake open and honest discussions, without resort to any misleading assertions.

5. Meetings

- Members are to commit to attend scheduled meetings, actively participate in the group's function and if necessary nominate a proxy.
- All meetings will be chaired by the Co-Chairs (NT EPA/DoH).
- Meetings will be defined by a written agenda circulated at least one week prior to the meeting.
- Decisions are to be made by consensus. If consensus on a decision is not possible, the Co-Chairs will make the final decision.
- Meeting agendas minutes will be provided on a rotational basis, this includes: preparing agendas and supporting papers, preparing meeting notes and information.
- The PFASIWG will utilise email, and formal papers for out-of-session discussion and agreement.
- Meetings will be held on an as needs basis but not more than 2 months apart for 2 hours at NT EPA offices.
- If required additional meetings will be arranged outside of these times at a time convenient to members.

6. Review

- The effectiveness and membership of this group will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Co-Chairs and updated accordingly.

Schedule 1:**PFASIWG Membership as at 22 May 2017**

Organisation	Role
NT EPA	Co- Chair
NT Department of Health	Co- Chair
Department of Defence	Member
NT Department of Primary Industry and Resources	Member
NT Department of Environment and Natural Resources	Member
NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services	Member
NT Department of Attorney General and Justice (NT WorkSafe)	Member
Northern Territory Airports Pty Ltd (Darwin International Airport)	Member
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (Commonwealth)	Member
Air Services Australia	Member
SADFO – RAAF Base Tindal	Member
SADFO – RAAF Base Darwin	Member
Department of the Chief Minister	Member
Power and Water Corporation	Member