

# Jervis Bay Range Facility and HMAS Creswell: Department of Defence PFAS Investigations

## Update for Booderee National Park visitors

This fact sheet has been developed to provide visitors to Booderee National Park with information on PFAS investigations in the Jervis Bay Territory.

### Key Points

- No elevated levels of PFAS contamination have been found at any of Booderee National Park's visitation areas.
- Signs have been erected outside Booderee National Park at Mary Creek, Summercloud Creek, Flatrock Creek and Captains Lagoon. They provide precautionary advice to help people to minimise their exposure.
- Tests show tap water in Booderee National Park – Jervis Bay Territory is safe.

### What is the PFAS investigation?

The Department of Defence is investigating PFAS contamination caused by the historical use of PFAS-based firefighting foams at Jervis Bay Range Facility and HMAS Creswell.

### What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of manufactured chemicals. Some are very effective at resisting heat, grease and water, so have been used in a wide range of applications, like carpet stain protection, water-proofed clothing and shoes, non-stick cookware, and some fast-food packaging. They have also been used in firefighting foams for extinguishing difficult fires (like liquid-fuel fires).

### Is PFAS contamination a problem?

Concerns have been raised (globally) about releases of some kinds of PFAS into the environment, because they don't break down naturally and they accumulate in the bodies of humans and other animals over time.

Most people in Australia (and many other countries) will have low levels of PFAS in their bodies through exposure to everyday household items like carpets, non-stick cookware and some food wrappings.

People living near sites where PFAS have been released into the environment in large amounts may have higher levels in their bodies – particularly if they have been drinking contaminated bore water over a long period of time. These people are given tailored advice on how to minimise their exposure, based on the outcomes of detailed PFAS site investigations in their area.

More information on PFAS contamination, investigations underway, and human health is available at [PFAS.gov.au](https://www.pfas.gov.au).

### Can I drink the tap water at Booderee National Park?

Yes. Laboratory tests of water samples from Lake Windermere – the primary source of Jervis Bay Territory's drinking water – show no levels of PFAS above the drinking water guidance value. Testing of the Jervis Bay Territory's treated potable water, which services Booderee National Park, found the water is safe to drink.

### Can I swim at Booderee National Park?

Yes. The National Health and Medical Research Council has published [recreational water guidelines for PFAS](#), to help regulators decide whether waterways are safe. Tests of water samples from Telegraph Creek, Green Patch, Bristol Point and Jervis Bay, found PFAS at below the acceptable levels for recreational water. This means that swimming at Booderee National Park is not a public health risk.



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## Where can I fish?

### *Booderee National Park*

As a national park, there are already some restrictions on fishing at Booderee. For example, all aquatic invertebrates and species on rock platforms are protected and spear fishing is prohibited. These and other existing conditions remain in effect and more information can be viewed at [parksaustralia.gov.au/booderee/do/fishing/](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/booderee/do/fishing/).

Where PFAS has been found in local seafood above acceptable levels, signage with advice about fishing has been erected by the relevant authorities.

### *Summercloud Creek, Captains Lagoon, Flat Rock Creek*

In September 2018, the Acting ACT Chief Health Officer advised the now Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, that due to recent findings of elevated levels of PFAS in seafood taken from Summercloud Creek, Captains Lagoon and Flat Rock Creek, collecting and eating fish or shellfish from these locations should be avoided as a precaution until the investigation is complete. There are signs in place at these locations to advise that collecting and eating seafood from Summercloud Creek, Captains Lagoon and Flat Rock Creek should be avoided.

### *Mary Creek*

In October 2016, based on some initial testing by the ACT Government, the ACT Chief Health Officer recommended the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council close Mary Creek to human use. Mary Creek has remained closed since that time. Signage at Mary Creek advises that this area is closed to human use which includes swimming, drinking the water and collecting and eating seafood.

## Have sites been tested in Booderee National Park?

The Department of Defence has tested sites in Booderee National Park. These include Telegraph Creek, Green Patch and Bristol Point. Detections of PFAS at these locations found they were at or below acceptable levels for recreational water use.

## Are there any signs with precautionary advice in Booderee National Park?

There are no signs with precautionary advice in Booderee National Park. Samples have been taken from popular visitation areas and results were at or below acceptable levels for recreational water use.

## What are the next steps?

The Department of Defence is continuing its PFAS investigation. Should any of the advice for Booderee National Park be updated, we will provide updates to visitors on our website [parksaustralia.gov.au/booderee](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/booderee).

## Where can I find out more information?

Further information on the detailed environmental investigation on and in the vicinity of Jervis Bay Range Facility can be found at the Department of Defence website and via the community hotline:

W: [defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/JervisBay](https://defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/JervisBay)

P: 1800 987 618

E: [jervisbay@ghd.com](mailto:jervisbay@ghd.com)

The Australian Government's PFAS website is dedicated to providing user friendly information about PFAS. It includes information about government action, precautionary health advice and frequently asked questions.

W: [PFAS.gov.au](https://PFAS.gov.au)



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