

The PFAS Health Study: Cross Sectional Survey and Blood Serum Study

Summary

The Per and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Health Study will investigate the exposure levels and potential health effects of PFAS in areas of known contamination in the communities of Williamstown, New South Wales (NSW), Oakey, Queensland (Qld) and Katherine, Northern Territory (NT), Australia.

The PFAS Health Study will test blood specimens of people living or working in an area contaminated with PFAS and compare it to people not living in those areas. The Study will also conduct a survey of these same people to understand the blood test results, along with health effects and other concerns.

People who have already had their blood collected through the Australian Government Department of Health Voluntary Blood Testing Program (VBTP) and have agreed to participate in the ANU-led study will be invited to participate. Participants will be able to complete a paper copy of the survey and mail it to the study team, or complete it online. Blood testing for the exposed population under the VBTP started in November 2016 and will end on 30 June 2019. Invitations to participate in the survey will be sent out by the Australian National University (ANU) in early to mid-2019 in the PFAS Investigation and Management Areas.

Three comparison towns will be selected and people will be randomly selected to complete the survey and provide a blood sample for PFAS. Invitations to participate in the survey and blood testing will be sent out through the Medicare database in mid-2019 in the comparison towns.

All blood samples in the Study will be tested for PFAS, cholesterol and uric acid. The study is aiming to include 3000 people overall; 500 from each of the three affected towns and 1500 from the comparison communities.

The study will finish in mid-2020.

The results of this study will provide information about how blood PFAS levels in people in affected towns compare to in people from other unexposed towns. The survey will highlight potential health issues and the amount of psychological distress in community members.