

PFAS Assessments in Tom Price and Paraburdoo Frequently Asked Questions

What is PFAS?

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of emerging, manufactured chemicals used in a wide variety of industries including firefighting, aerospace, photographic imaging, electrical engineering, automotive, construction, electronics, and aviation industries.

The effects of PFAS in the environment are largely unknown, but it is understood they stay in the environment (water and soil) for an extended period without breaking down.

Where has PFAS been found in Australia?

As a result of widespread use, PFAS has been found in low levels in soils, surface water and groundwater in most urban areas around the world, including Western Australia.

PFAS is often detected near airports, landfills, mining operations, wastewater treatment plants, firefighting stations, and other waste disposal sites.

What is the Department of Health's advice regarding PFAS?

Information on the health impacts of PFAS can be found on the Healthy WA website or scan the QR code on page 3.

Is Rio Tinto still using firefighting products containing PFAS?

No. Rio Tinto Emergency Services stopped using firefighting foams containing PFAS in Western Australia in 2015.

How is PFAS regulated in WA?

The Western Australian Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) regulates the response of landowners to PFAS contamination, under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*.

WA environmental laws, in particular the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*, make sure contaminated sites (including PFAS contaminated sites) are identified, investigated and, where necessary, cleaned up.

For more information, please scan the QR code on page 3.

Does PFAS impact human health?

People are exposed to PFAS chemicals in many ways in everyday life such as the food they eat, the water they drink, and use of consumer products.

For most people the level of exposure is likely to be relatively small. No public health and safety concerns in relation to PFAS have been identified for the general Australian population.

As a precaution, WA Health continues to recommend exposure to PFAS be minimised wherever possible.

Information on the health impacts of PFAS can be found on the Healthy WA website.

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What PFAS assessments did Rio Tinto recently do in Tom Price and Paraburdoo?

Due to the historic use of firefighting foam containing PFAS at the Paraburdoo and Tom Price Fire Stations, the Western Australian Government classified these fire stations as *potentially contaminated investigation required* (PCIR).

In 2023, in partnership with an independent consultant, Rio Tinto undertook PFAS assessments in Paraburdoo and Tom Price to see if PFAS had migrated outside the boundaries of the fire stations.

This involved collecting samples from an extensive groundwater monitoring network, as well as soil and surface water samples.

Why did Rio Tinto conduct this assessment?

As the owner/occupier of these fire stations, it is a requirement under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* that Rio Tinto investigates whether PFAS has spread from the sites.

What were the results of the 2023 assessments?

The assessments ruled out any current risks to human health. They did find some migration of PFAS outside the boundaries of the fire stations but the concentrations and/or locations PFAS does not present a current risk to human health.

Is there a risk to my health?

No. The PFAS assessments have ruled out any current risk to human health.

Is my drinking water safe?

Yes, it is safe. We regularly monitor the drinking water supplied to Tom Price and Paraburdoo, including villages, and it meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

In addition to routine water testing, the town tanks and our villages have been subject to specific PFAS testing and the water is safe to drink.

Is it safe for people to play in creeks and playgrounds in Tom Price and Paraburdoo?

We have undertaken testing of all locations in Tom Price and Paraburdoo where the potential for PFAS migration was identified. There is no evidence to suggest people accessing creeks or playgrounds could be exposed to an unacceptable level of PFAS, either in Tom Price or Paraburdoo.



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When will you give us an update next?

The health and safety of our employees and residents in the communities where we operate is our highest priority. We will continue to work with regulators and the community to share information about our PFAS assessments as details become available.

Who can I contact for more information?

Rio Tinto is committed to timely and transparent communication with the Tom Price and Paraburdoo communities.

We encourage you to email communityfeedback@riotinto.com with any questions regarding the results.

If your household and/or property is using a groundwater bore, we still want to hear from you by emailing the address above.



Scan for more information on PFAS and how it is regulated from the WA Government.



Scan for PFAS health advice from the WA Department of Health.