MELBOURNE AIRPORT

PFAS

Per- and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) are manufactured chemicals that are used to make products resistant to heat, stains, grease and water, and as stable chemicals have been widely used for more than 50 years in many consumer and chemical products.

Under State and Commonwealth legislation they are considered pollutants of concern and landowners and tenants have an obligation to effectively manage them.

At Melbourne and Launceston Airports they were extensively used by Airservices Australia and its predecessors in aviation firefighting foam in training and responding to emergency incidents. The foams have also been used to a lesser extent by aviation tenants in hangar deluge systems at Melbourne Airport.

Our actions

Multiple assessment and monitoring events have been completed at each site to determine the potential human health and environmental risk from PFAS. This has included both on and offsite sampling and assessment, and use of third party data.

Actions we have taken at Melbourne Airport include fencing off livestock from waterways impacted by PFAS, storing surplus soil from construction works in a dedicated soil storage facility, treating water from construction sites in a water treatment plant, and installing a second water treatment plant to remove PFAS and other contaminants to minimise offsite impacts.

The assessment of downstream properties that use water impacted by Melbourne Airport's water catchment concluded that PFAS accumulation in soil is not a significant contributor to PFAS uptake in edible crops or produce, and PFAS-related health risks are low and acceptable.

Melbourne Airport - PFAS

Targets

Polluters held accountable to manage PFAS and other contaminants

Arundel Creek baseflow water treated 350 days / year

100% of PFAS impacted wastewater treated

Total water treated to May '22

Arundel Creek

3 million litres

Soil Storage Facility

31 million litres

Our journey timeline

2016 PFAS testing commenced in surface water monitoring program

2017 Groundwater wells installed and annual monitoring commenced

2017 Detailed site investigations undertaken at Melbourne and Launceston

2018 Initial risk assessments and conceptual site models completed

2018 PFAS Project Control Groups established for both airports

2018 Data review and gap analysis undertken

2018
- PFAS information pack issued by Melbourne Airport
- Qantas removes foam containing PFAS from its aviation hangars

2019 Excavation and thermal destruction of 100 tonnes of soil from a PFAS 'hot spot'

2019
- PFAS information pack issued by Launceston Airport
- Skytraders removes foam containing PFAS from its aviation hangars

2020 PFAS temporary soil storage facility and water treatment plant commissioned at Melbourne Airport

2021 Offsite testing at Melbourne Airport verified risk to community as low to negligible

2021 Arundel Creek Water Treatment Plant commissioned

2021 Launceston Airport commences legal action against Airservices Australia about PFAS pollution and management on their leases

2022 Launceston Airport commences design for temporary soil storage facility and water treatment plant

2022 Launceston Airport Commonwealth Environment Regulator issues draft 'Environmental Remedial Order' to Airservices Australia for PFAS pollution

To view more about Melbourne Airport's sustainable and environmentally responsible approach go to:

melbourneairport.com.au