



NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PFAS CONTAMINATION IN WATERWAYS AND DRINKING
WATER SUPPLIES THROUGHOUT NEW SOUTH WALES

**Inquiry Into PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water
Supplies Throughout New South Wales**

Hearing: 5 February 2025

Mr Tony Chappel, CEO, NSW EPA

Mr Stephen Beaman, Executive Director, Regulatory Practice, NSW EPA

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

**1. Will NSW adopt stricter PFAS exposure limits in line with international
guidelines?**

This question is best directed to NSW Health.

**2. Why has the EPA not taken stronger enforcement action against PFAS
polluters?**

Enforcement is only one regulatory tool that is used by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to improve outcomes for the environment and the health of the community. The EPA's Regulatory Framework outlines eight regulatory elements.

The EPA's approach to PFAS has incorporated all elements of the regulatory framework.

With regard to potential PFAS polluters and PFAS source sites, the EPA's priority has been to remediate sites (through capping or soil removal) where PFAS could pose a risk to the health of the community or environment.

To identify sites, the EPA has adopted a sector-based approach guided by the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan. As of 20 February 2025, the EPA has assessed 1100 sites in NSW across 29 sectors.

The EPA is actively working on 51 high priority sites, including defence bases, airports, firefighting training facilities, where there is a history of PFAS firefighting foam use in large quantities. The EPA requires site owners to conduct investigations, on-going monitoring and remediation where possible.

3. Should NSW ban the future use of all PFAS chemicals?

NSW has already banned the use of long chain PFAS chemicals in fire fighting foam through the Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022.

The national Industrial Chemicals Environmental Management Standard (IChEMS) will prohibit a wide range of uses of the most used PFAS chemicals - PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS - from 1 July 2025. The national bans include import, export and manufacture of products containing these chemicals. IChEMS is given force in NSW through the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 so these requirements will have effect in NSW.

The forward work plan for IChEMS includes national scheduling of additional PFAS chemicals. Details are available here:

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protection/chemicals-management/national-standard/standard-setting#our-workplan>