

PFAS Assessments in Tom Price and Paraburdoo Frequently Asked Questions

What is PFAS?

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of emerging, man-made 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.

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 and 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. Scan the QR code on page 3.

How does Rio Tinto keep its drinking water safe?

We regularly monitor our towns' and camps' drinking water supply and if pathogens or contaminants are recorded, we must notify the WA Department of Health.

All results from our regular testing meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

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 in Western Australia.

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

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.

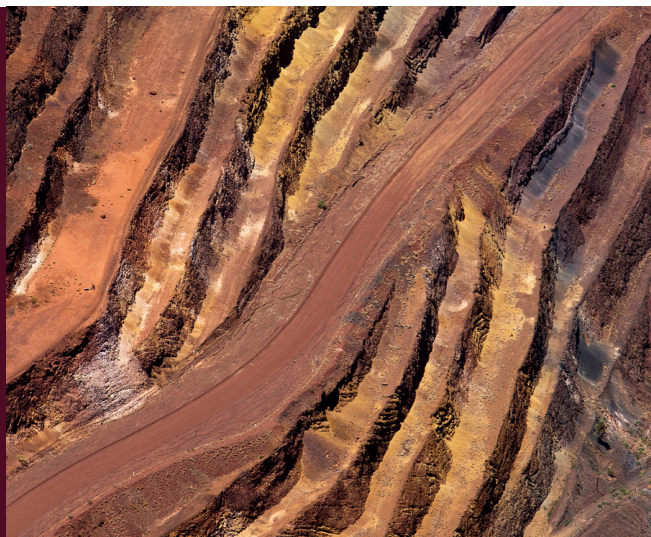
Is my drinking water safe?

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

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

Is there a risk to my health?

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



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How is PFAS regulated in Western Australia?

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.

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 May and June 2022, 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 if PFAS has spread from the sites.

What are the next steps?

We have shared the PFAS results with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER).

We are working with an independent, DWER accredited Contaminated Sites Auditor who is required to provide independent oversight of our testing, management and next steps.

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, scan the QR code on page 3 to find out more.

Is it safe for people to play in creeks or 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.

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 on sharing 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 contact our community engagement team by emailing 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.

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What were the results of the assessments?

The assessments have 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 of this PFAS does not present a current risk to human health.

Paraburdoo

- PFAS has migrated in groundwater beneath four residential properties owned by Rio Tinto and one property which is part of Rocklea Palms.
- As no groundwater bores are in use at these properties there is no current risk to people and the local environment.
- These properties have been reported to the Department of Water and Environment Regulation, and they may be classified under the Contaminated Sites Act to prevent anyone from installing a bore to use groundwater in the future.
- As part of the PFAS assessments, the town's drinking water bore network and main water tank were also assessed. One water supply bore (out of a total of nine) was taken out of service due to the detection of PFAS and reported to the Department of Health and the Department of Water and Environment Regulation.
- The PFAS detected within this bore was not of sufficient concentration to impact the town's main water tank, and testing confirms the town's water supply is safe to drink.
- The impacted bore will remain switched off and isolated from the main water tank.



Tom Price

- Low levels of PFAS were identified in groundwater to the northwest of the Tom Price Fire Station.
- This does not pose a health risk as no groundwater bores are in use in this area and there is no current risk to people and the local environment.
- The testing has not identified any affected properties which required reporting to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.
- We have identified low levels of PFAS in a drainage channel in Tom Price, however these concentrations are not considered to pose a health risk.
- This drainage channel runs parallel to Tamarind Street and Pine Street in Tom Price, near Tom Price Primary School.
- We will communicate directly with the school Principal. There is no current risk to students or staff at the school.



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



Scan for more information on PFAS health advice from the WA Department of Health