

# Orchard Hills contamination testing

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## Where is testing for PFAS occurring? How do I know if I need to have testing completed on my property?

The department received advice from the Commonwealth Department of Defence that there may be per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) present in part of the precinct study area. In addition to our ongoing technical studies we have also engaged a consultant to carry out soil and water testing work within and adjoining the precinct to confirm the nature and extent of the PFAS.

PFAS movement in the environment is via surface water and groundwater transport. Sample locations will be focused on waterways and at different locations from those water sources. Most of the testing will occur on publicly owned land, including road verges, and on land owned or controlled by different public authorities (e.g. Sydney Metro and Penrith City Council), however there are a small number of private properties we have identified as possible testing locations. If your property has been identified, the Department will have already contacted you.

The revised exhibition timing of early 2024 will allow for the soil and water testing work to be completed (scheduled to occur during early December 2023) and its results considered, before the public exhibition occurs.

We will work closely with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) (as the NSW Government's regulatory lead on PFAS) and the Commonwealth Department of Defence to keep the community informed of the investigation progress.

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## What are the soil collection methods?

Most of the sampling proposed is by surface sampling with hand tools, such as a handheld trowel or shovel. The samples will consist of the collection of soil in one small glass jar (approx. 250 ml) at each location. Given the small volume of soil collected there will be very minimal soil disturbed.

The drilling of up to three ground water monitoring wells is proposed along the southern boundary of the precinct, on public land. This will be via a small track-mounted drilling rig with a 150 mm diameter auger, which will also result in minimal soil disturbance. If drilling is to be completed in where community members or government agency workers can access, temporary bollards and warning tape will be setup around the drill rig as a 15m exclusion zone, restricting access into the work area.

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## What if my property is contaminated?

For those lands found with PFAS, the Department will work closely with the Department of Defence and EPA on further PFAS investigations and, if necessary, PFAS Management Plans. This will include remediation options assessment, if required.

The presence of PFAS in the environment does not necessarily mean there is a human health risk. Please refer to the Federal Government's dedicated PFAS information portal ([website below](#)).

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## What will happen to the rezoning process if contamination is found?

Once the contamination testing results have been analysed, the department will review the draft precinct planning work completed to date to identify what changes, if any, need to be made to the draft precinct planning package or process to respond to the findings.

The outcomes of the contamination testing will be included within the exhibition material. Following the initial testing in December 2023, if there is a need for additional testing the Department will update the community.

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## More information

For more information on PFAS contamination and access to a range of Government resources, please visit:

- the Federal Government's dedicated PFAS information portal at: [www.pfas.gov.au](http://www.pfas.gov.au)
- the NSW Environmental Protection Authority's PFAS contamination portal at: [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/contaminated-land/pfas-investigation-program](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/contaminated-land/pfas-investigation-program)

For more information on the precinct planning process for Orchard Hills please:

- visit the Orchard Hills precinct webpage at: [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/orchard-hills](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/orchard-hills)
- email the Orchard Hills team at: [orchardhills@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:orchardhills@planning.nsw.gov.au)
- phone the department and ask for the Orchard Hills team on **1300 420 596 (option 2)**.

You can also contact the Independent Community Commissioner for Orchard Hills, Roberta Ryan, by calling **0408 115 467** or emailing her office at [kate.robinson@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:kate.robinson@newcastle.edu.au)