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Contaminated communities offer free bottled water to Australia's top doctor

Australia's Chief Medical Officer is being offered free bottled water from communities whose land and water supply has been contaminated PFAS chemicals, after he downplayed any associated health risks.

Professor Brendan Murphy told a Parliamentary Inquiry into PFAS that when it came to health risks from exposure to the chemical that is leaching off over 90 Government, commercial and industrial sites around Australia, *"the evidence base in this area is generally weak and inconsistent."*

"We're simply staggered that one of the nation's leading health officials can dismiss a growing wave of highly regarded international studies linking PFAS to cancers, developmental, reproductive, thyroid and liver disease, immune system toxicity, and other health effects," said Coalition Against PFAS President Lindsay Clout.

"In communities such as Williamstown, Katherine and Oakey people are told they can't drink water or eat food from their land and have PFAS levels in their bloodstream that are up to 10 times the recommended national level – yet Professor Murphy has adopted a 'nothing to see here' approach."

"Well if that's the case we're sure he'll have no issue in accepting our offer of free bottled water for six months from one of the PFAS contaminated bores at numerous sites around Australia. We'd welcome him to undergo blood testing at the end of that period and, whatever the result, publically state to thousands of people living this nightmare that they should not be worried," said Mr Clout.

He said supplying bottled water was a genuine offer given Professor Murphy's stance was clearly having an influence on the Federal Government's policy of inaction in relation to PFAS remediation and compensation.

"In the United States this week legal action has been commenced to make manufacturers of this chemical fund further independent studies into the harmful health effects of PFAS.

In Australia we can't even get our top health officials to acknowledge the science."



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CAP has today written an open letter to Professor Murphy, setting out its free water offer, alternatives to that offer and listing a number of international peer reviewed studies.

That letter to Professor Murphy can be read here: ([link](#))

Information on the legal action commenced in the United States can be seen here:
<https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/firefighter-wants-studynot-moneyin-fluorinated-chemicals-suit>

Ends

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Background on CAP and PFAS:

CAP is made up of representatives from communities around Australia including representatives from Williamstown, Oakey, Katherine and Gippsland.

Those communities were among the first in Australia to learn that PFAS associated chemicals used in firefighting foam have leached into their community. These toxic plumes spread via waterways, with the bio-persistent nature of PFOS related chemicals meaning it can take over 70 years for them to break down.

International studies have highlighted increased risks of cancer and other major diseases from exposure. In Australia impacted communities have received conflicting levels of advice but most are warned not to drink water or eat food of their land due to health risks.

The RACP in a formal submission to the Government stated the current advice in relation to PFAS is: *“likely to be confusing for the public.”* and that *“we advocate for a change to the national health advice that incorporates the latest international evidence for adverse human health effects.”*

The Parliament of Australia has conducted an Inquiry into the Government’s management of PFAS contamination in and around Defence bases with the report expected in the coming weeks.



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