Minister for Health, Natasha Fyles, today released the findings of testing in waterways at Rapid Creek and Ludmilla Creek for the presence of PFAS (per-and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances).

The tests confirmed the presence of PFAS (from historic use of firefighting foam at Darwin Airport) in sediments and some aquatic life, but at levels that are considered low risk to the public.

The NT Fire Rescue and Emergency Services stopped the use of PFAS in the early 1990’s.

“These initial results will provide comfort for the communities of Rapid Creek and Ludmilla and those that use these waterways,” Minister Fyles said.

“Current advice for both areas is that there is low risk to public health.

“Phase 1 of the testing has shown that along with low recreational risk, aquatic foods including long bums and periwinkles have PFAS levels that are considered a low health risk.

“However, further testing of fish, crabs and prawns is being undertaken over next few months as part of Phase 2 of the investigation to provide more definitive public health advice.

“We advise that people should not eat fish, crabs and prawns from Rapid Creek and Ludmilla Creek until further testing is complete.”

In June 2016, the Department of Health commissioned Charles Darwin University (CDU) to provide an independent study into levels of PFAS (per-and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances) in Rapid Creek and Ludmilla Creek.

CDU’s study was in cooperation with Senior Rangers from the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation and University of Queensland.

The independent report explored Sediment and Aquatic life sampling in Rapid Creek and Ludmilla Creek.

As a precaution, signage was erected advising people not to consume any fish or shellfish while the creeks were being tested from June 2016.
“I know there has been some concern within the community and, as a local who grew up using the waterways, I am pleased with the initial findings,” Minister Fyles said.

“The Northern Territory Government will continue to make the health and safety of local residents our number one priority and we will continue water testing to make sure there is no public health risk.

“Until then the precautionary advice will remain in place while Phase 2 testing takes place.”

Further information is available from https://ntepa.nt.gov.au/

Advice can also be obtained from the Commonwealth Department of Health


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