

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 14 September

Home buyers risk purchasing sites affected by a hidden PFAS legacy

The number of PFAS-contaminated sites across Australia may be larger than once thought, according to a new analysis being presented at the CleanUp 2026 conference today. And people are at risk of buying the land without knowing about past contamination.

The research, by Australian environmental information company Lotsearch, suggests the potential PFAS legacy could extend well beyond sites such as airports and firefighting sites—which have received much of the attention to date.

Lotsearch previously identified more than 260,000 known and potentially contaminated sites across Australia using released government information and more than a decade of its own historical land-use research. The company has now compared the activities associated with these sites against activities linked to PFAS use, storage and firefighting under Australia's PFAS National Environmental Management Plan. The analysis found a large portion of the 260,000 sites may have experienced a historical activity specifically associated with PFAS.

Lotsearch co-founder and CEO, Howard Waldron, said the findings highlighted a significant gap between what is known about contaminated land and the much larger number of sites where historical activities indicate contamination.

"There is a major information gap between the sites we know are contaminated and those where historical activities suggest there could be a contamination risk," Mr Waldron said. "It is critical to better understand this gap because everyday people risk buying land without clear, consistent information about past contamination, what has been remediated and what risks may remain".

Lotsearch's findings are based on historical and spatial information, rather than physical testing, so Mr Waldron said further site investigation would be necessary to determine whether contamination was present.

He said Lotsearch could refine its analysis if there was more public disclosure about sites that are under investigation, sites that have been determined to be clean, and sites that have been remediated in the past.

"Looking at the numbers, there is obviously a gap between publicly available information and what we believe sits in the potential contamination bucket," Mr Waldron said. "We would like to see more public transparency, with more environmental information being made available and considered earlier in the property lifecycle to help ensure potential purchasers of property don't inadvertently buy a contaminated site that can bring with it health, stress and financial risks."

Mr Waldron said Lotsearch was cautious about not causing fear among communities based on their research. He said that more information, and the ability to make better-informed decisions early in the process, helps everyone from professionals to purchasers deal with any issues before they become bigger problems.

crcCARE is hosting CleanUp 2026 in Adelaide from 13 – 17 September. crcCARE is a partnership of organisations dedicated to developing new ways to deal with and prevent contamination of soil, water and air.

The conference program is available [here](#).

Media enquires

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Presentation: 'The PFAS Blind Spot: Understanding the true scale of potentially contaminated land in Australia', 11:45 am Monday 14 (Hall N Adelaide Convention Centre).

Media: Complimentary, free media passes are available for any accredited media personnel who wish to attend the conference in person.