



Esperance Cleanup and Recovery Project Update

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Project snapshot

Following the completion of broad based soil sampling across the Esperance townsite, no results have shown to be above the ECRP cleanup guideline of 300mg/kg. Results of detailed sampling at individual premises in the stages closer to the port are showing that approximately 90 per cent of premises analysed require some form of cleaning.

The following items highlight the progress made to date against the various project activities currently underway:

Broad based soil sampling

Type "A" broad based soil sampling has been completed across the townsite. A total of 301 soil samples were taken at 250m intervals along concentric circles every 500m radiating out from the port. Additional samples were also taken at shorter intervals closer to the port. No soil results were found to be above the adopted ECRP cleanup guideline of 300mg/kg, and in many outlying bush areas the readings were below the limit of detection.

Premises sampling

Letters seeking consent to sample are now being sent to owners and occupiers in stage four (see map on page 3). The project team has engaged 12 samplers through local labour hire companies and provided appropriate training in sampling techniques. The sampling team has stepped up to sampling 30 premises per week and is continually booked up two weeks in advance. Capacity to further increase the sampling program will be sought over the coming weeks. In addition to the regular sampling of premises which is currently underway, a validation team is following the trial cleaning project to sample those areas that have been cleaned and verifying that the cleaning was successful.

Approximately 280 premises have been sampled to date and analysis has been completed on approximately 150 of these premises. Approximately 90 per cent of the premises analysed against the cleanup guidelines show that some form of cleaning is required. We anticipate that this percentage would reduce as we move further away from the port.

Cleaning

The trial cleaning project is in progress and 25 homes have been cleaned to date. The trial is due to finish at the end of March with approximately 30 homes cleaned. The validation results have been good with roof surfaces, rainwater tanks, roof spaces, internal surfaces and external surfaces showing that the cleaning was successful. There are a number of important lessons learned that will feed back into the major cleaning contracts. For example, one of the most technically challenging areas to clean is carpet.

Data analysis

The initial stages of the project have highlighted unexpected delays in timeframes for the delivery of analytical results to homeowners. This has caused some concern in the community and we are working very hard to address this issue. Sampling methodology in the early stages of the project has meant that the level of information available to make decisions



on cleaning requirements has not always been adequate. From what we have learnt from the trial cleaning project, the current sampling methodologies have been amended to reflect these needs and are now delivering excellent results for analysis against established clean-up guidelines.

Data management

The ECRP team has road-tested the prototype computer application interface developed by Trilogy Resources to help manage the sampling and cleaning workflow. Trilogy Resources is now creating the “live” version of the software to install on the ECRP network, which is due to be operational in April. This workflow application has been designed to be compatible with the Department of Health database, which is the central repository to house ECRP data.

Project presentations – “Over the Horizon”

The ECRP was invited to provide a presentation at the recent “Over the Horizon” conference held at the Esperance Civic Centre on Thursday 4 March. The conference had approximately 200 attendees and was opened by the Minister for Regional Development and Lands the Hon. Brendan Grylls. In the Minister’s opening statements he acknowledged the difficult time that the Esperance community had gone through with the lead incident. He also acknowledged the positive efforts of the ECRP team and the fact that the project was now well under way and was gaining positive reports from within government and the community.

Office accommodation

To accommodate the expanding project, additional premises have been leased at 125 Dempster Street and the required fit-out is almost complete. These premises will replace the existing lab facilities at the Department of Agriculture and Food on the outskirts of Esperance. Although this was initially a useful facility, the logistics of travel became an operational efficiency issue for the project. The new premises will house a Niton testing area, two data analysers, two or three works supervisors and a bookings receptionist. It will also act as the base for the sampling teams and a storage area for sampling equipment, customer files and physical samples. The existing offices at 113 Dempster Street will remain as the administration head office.

ECRP staff matters

The size and complexity of the project is beginning to ramp up as the detailed sampling and cleaning phases progress. The need for additional resources to support the existing project team has seen the appointment of two data analysers, two sampling supervisors and a bookings officer. In the coming months we will also appoint two or three works supervisors to assist in the supervision of the major cleaning contracts.



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Map showing project stages

