



# Esperance Cleanup and Recovery Project Update

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## Project snapshot

The ECRP has now sampled approximately 1750 premises and cleaned approximately 450 of these across the Esperance town site. Analysis of test results in the outer stages of the project has indicated that cleaning will extend through to the end of 2011 and may involve up to 2000 premises.

## Key project outcomes

The key project outcomes to the end of January are as follows:

	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total number of premises sampled	93	64	1746
Total number of samples sent to ChemCentre for testing	4964	2583	74,547
Total number of premises analysed against the ECRP guidelines	93	56	1464
Total number of premises requiring some form of cleaning	91	48	1371
Total number of premises where cleaning has been completed	36	48	443

## Health, safety and environment

ECRP staff and contractors have continued to work safely during January and there were no injuries or near-misses to report.

## Sampling

The sampling team has commenced detailed sampling of homes in Stage 10 (see attached map for details). Sampling also continued across a number of earlier stages as consent forms continue flowing back into the ECRP offices.

The ECRP recently purchased an additional four portable XRF Analysers to make available a total of six units for the sampling and validation teams. All sampling and validation personnel have undergone competency-based training in order to become proficient in the use of XRF Analysers and each sampling team now carries a unit to all sampling locations. This will assist the sampling teams in identifying sources of lead in the home other than from the port or rail, prior to the commencement of any cleaning. This knowledge will assist the ECRP to more effectively manage cleaning resources and provide a more detailed closeout report to the client.

As sampling moves to areas further from the port and rail, it is becoming more evident that contamination from Magellan lead is dropping off and other sources of lead are being identified. This is not unexpected, as background levels of lead exist in a variety of forms, particularly from lead based paint, lead flashings and in the makeup of many common materials. It must be noted that these "background levels" often exceed the ECRP cleanup guidelines. In many cases these non-Magellan sources of lead are bound within the material being tested and do not present as deposited dust contamination from the port or rail. The ECRP cleaning scope does not include these other sources of lead, as cleaning will not be effective in removing the lead bound within the material. As part of their individual sampling evaluation reports, premise owner/occupiers are notified accordingly.



## **Cleaning**

The cleaning teams enjoyed a short break over the Christmas period but were hard at work again in early January. The cleaners were able to focus their efforts on one of the local primary schools, using the school holiday period to minimise disruption to staff and students. As expected, the school required a limited amount of cleaning, similar to other premises in the area relative to the port.

A small number of localised contaminated soil sites, primarily within a small radius at the base of some downpipes, have been scheduled for soil replacement. The ECRP sampling and cleaning teams have worked closely together to develop a methodology for calculating the volume of soil to be replaced at these sites and a procedure to perform the work safely and without mobilising the contaminant to the environment. The soil replacement program commences in early February.

## **Waste disposal**

The ECRP estimates that approximately 10 double-container loads of dry bulk waste will be shipped to Red Hill in Perth during 2011. A local contractor, Esperance Freight Lines, was successful in their bid to carry out the shipping and disposal. The first container load for 2011 is due to leave Esperance in the middle of February.

## **Sentinel monitoring**

The Sentinel Monitoring program commenced in October 2010 and initially involves six homes from across the Esperance town site. The aim of the program is to collect dust samples in Petri Dishes over a three month period from various locations around each home including the roof space, one living area and one external area. The first three-month monitoring period has now expired and those dishes have been collected, sampled and replaced with new ones. Those samples have been sent to the ChemCentre in Perth for testing and analysis. In the meantime, the ECRP is steadily adding more homes to the monitoring program, with the aim of having at least one home in each sampling stage as cleaning is completed (the stages are indicated on the attached map).

One of the key learnings so far is that dust samples from open external areas are susceptible to strong wind and rain, which is a characteristic of Esperance weather. The ECRP Sentinel Monitoring methodology has therefore been amended, replacing Petri dishes with “Winchester Bottles” (pictured at right) for external areas. The Esperance port also uses Winchester Bottles to capture dust from the air around the port. One of the benefits to the ECRP now is that the sample data can be more readily compared to the data obtained from the port. This will allow the ECRP to draw on a larger dataset for monitoring purposes.



## **Project timeframes**

Analysis of sample results from Stages 8 and 9 of the project have indicated that, although the level of cleaning required at individual premises is dropping off, some premises in these stages have still been affected by lead contamination from either ship loading events at the port or rail movements. It is therefore anticipated that the project will now continue through to the end of 2011 and may involve the cleaning of up to 2000 premises.



### **Egg and vegetable testing**

The ECRP has tested 19 eggs and 53 pieces of fruit and vegetables from concerned residents across Esperance. Samples were taken from 19 individual premises during the months of December 2010 and January 2011.

Overall the results for lead in eggs, fruit, herbs and vegetables were below the limit of detection and in those situations where lead has been detected, it was well below the maximum limit in the appropriate food standards code.

The lead and nickel data from ECRP testing has therefore shown that there is no public health risk associated with consumption of home grown fruit and vegetables or eggs in Esperance.



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Map showing ECRP Project Stages