



Tuesday 13 July 2010

TITLE: Response to enquiry from the Kalgoorlie Miner

On Friday 25 June 2010 the Natasha Boddy from the Kalgoorlie Miner presented the following questions:

Why has it been necessary to wait until now before the properties are cleaned?
Also will there be further sampling which could see more properties need to be cleaned?
What is the reason for the cleaning?

The following was provided as a response.

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Esperance cleanup director Wayne Winchester said sampling commenced in early last year and cleaning trials commenced in October.

"The Esperance lead contamination was a unique problem and there was no off-the-shelf cleanup solution," Mr Winchester said.

"It took a lot of time to test, clean and re-test to make sure we had the right methodology, people and equipment, but we had to make sure we got it right."

He said a team of samplers was systematically working through the town, starting with properties closest to the port.

"So far we have sampled 850 individual properties and sent approximately 30,000 samples to ChemCentre for testing," he said.

"We have already identified 317 properties that will require some form of cleaning and we have engaged cleaning contractors to start work on 1 July."

Mr Winchester said as further sampling was done and results analysed, more cleaning work would be identified.

"Sampling is continuing and the amount of cleaning required is dropping off significantly as we move further out from the port," he said.

He said the majority of the cleaning would be finished before Christmas.

Between 2005 and 2007 lead carbonate was exported in bulk through the Port of Esperance. Dust containing lead escaped during the unloading, storage and loading processes and this led to contamination of areas in and around the Esperance town site.

In April 2007 the State Government commissioned a parliamentary inquiry and report into the cause and extent of the lead contamination in Esperance. In late 2008 a steering committee for the cleanup project was established and in January 2009 a project director was appointed and an office established in Esperance to manage the clean up project.

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