

ESPERANCE CLEANUP AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

MINUTES of the STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

11 DECEMBER 2008, ESPERANCE

In attendance

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| Mr. Michael Jackson, | Co-ordinator Esperance Community Consultations |
| Mr. Paul Clifton | Shire of Esperance |
| Mrs. Michelle Crisp | Locals for Esperance Development [LED] |
| Dr. Charles Douglas | Department of Health [DOH] |
| Ms Sharon Clark | Landcorp |
| Mr John Fischer | Department for Planning and Infrastructure [DPI] |
| Mr. Lindsay Gillam | Department of Health [DOH] |
| Ms. Toni Hawkins | Board Member, Esperance Port Authority |
| Ms. Janet Macmillan | Dept. Environment and Conservation [DEC] |
| Ms. Pam Norris | Locals for Esperance Development [LED] |
| Dr. John Ottaway | Dept. Environment and Conservation [DEC] |
| Mr. Adam Rayner | Esperance Compliance Officer [DEC] |
| Mr. Peter Skitmore | Dept. Environment and Conservation [DEC] |

1. Introduction and Governance

Members noted:

- The Premier Barnett's statement to Parliament regarding the Cleanup of lead in Esperance. This statement sets out the objectives and mandate for the Cleanup project.
- The Draft Framework Plan for the Esperance Cleanup and Recovery Project
- The objectives of the Esperance Cleanup and Recovery Project as follows:
 - To assess/audit levels of lead and nickel in homes, premises and public places in Esperance and determine the need for cleaning by reference to agreed standards and guidelines
 - To remove lead and nickel residues in homes, premises and in public places to acceptable standards so that these contaminants do not pose a risk to the health of the Esperance community.
 - To validate the cleaning process.
 - To work with the Esperance community in this project and provide ongoing progress reporting.
- Members considered that these objectives should be expanded to include sentinel monitoring of homes.

2. Role and Membership of the Steering Committee

Members noted:

- The Department for Planning and Infrastructure is to be the lead agency for the Esperance Cleanup and Recovery Project [ECRP].

- The Steering Committee will coordinate the planning and implementation of the ECRP.
- The Steering Committee consists of representatives of the following:
 - The Esperance Community [Locals for Esperance Development]
 - Department of Health
 - Department of Environment and Conservation
 - Department for Planning and Infrastructure
 - LandCorp
 - The Shire of Esperance
 - Co-ordinator, Esperance Community Consultations.
- The Project Director for the ECRP is also to be a member of the Steering Committee. [It was noted that steps were currently being made to transfer Dr John Ottaway from the DEC to DPI in order to undertake this role. It was anticipated that Dr Ottaway would take up this position in Esperance on 26 January 2009.]
- The EsPA is not formally a member of the Steering Committee, but would be represented on an ad hoc basis especially in view of its previous work in coordinating the cleaning of homes and of rainwater tanks immediately after the lead contamination was first recognised.
- Other DEC officers present at the meeting were welcome to attend on 'as needs' basis.
- A suggestion from Pam Norris that a representative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry be present on the Committee. The current CEO of the CCI; Marcus Tromp, who had historically been involved with Tourism in Esperance was nominated to be a member of the Committee.
- Meeting Frequency: Members anticipated that the Steering Committee would meet once per month in the lead up to and commencement of the cleanup process. The frequency of meetings will be determined as the project takes place. The next meeting was anticipated to be convened mid January 2009.

of homes should commence as soon as possible, and ahead of removal of the lead currently stored at the Port.

- Members also noted that sampling and cleaning has to be systematic and done according to standards and protocols determined and agreed in advance of the work commencing, and that this may mean a later start date.
- That there was a potential for recontamination due to continuing bulk nickel concentrate exports. It was confirmed that the government had given a commitment to lead and nickel contamination and that would include any recontamination.
- The timing of cleanup will depend on the scope of the works to be completed. A period of 6-12 months was currently in the Draft Framework Plan. Members considered that it is more likely that the clean-up will take a minimum of 12 months, and may extend beyond that.

4. Access to External Experience in Cleaning of Homes etc

Members noted:

- DEC was considering bringing out to Esperance a representative from the USEPA to provide advice on the clean-up of homes. This was supported.
- There was also value in contacting both the New South Wales and South Australian Governments to access experience and protocols relating to the clean-up of Broken Hill and Port Pirie.
- However, it was also noted that the lead in Esperance, being lead carbonate differs from lead sulphide which is the type of contamination which has occurred in other towns [Northampton, Port Pirie, Newcastle and Broken Hill], and that therefore there may not be many people with experience in dealing with removal and 'cleaning up' lead carbonate.

Action: Project Director to follow through with discussions with USEPA, and NSW and SA governments regarding the cleanups of Newcastle and Port Pirie.

5. Scope of the Cleanup Project

Members noted and discussed:

- That the proposed process for the cleanup of the homes in Esperance was as follows:
 - A sampling protocol will be developed;
 - Early in 2009, homes to be cleaned will be identified
 - An audit will be completed on essential information on the homes such as the type of home; construction, presence/absence of water tanks, number of occupants and relative ages etc. This information will be entered into a data base;
 - Homes will be sampled for lead and nickel residues;
 - Homes will be cleaned;
 - Further samples will be taken to validate the cleaning process.

- As a first step, the Sampling Protocol will be developed to guide future sampling. This will be developed using experience gained from cleaning of other similar sites [eg Port Pirie, Newcastle and from the US EPA] with input from DOH and DEC. This work on the Sampling Protocol, ideally, should be carried out as soon as practicable in January.
- Secondly, about 10 homes and residential properties will be extensively sampled as soon as possible, possibly located along two or three transects going through the areas of suspected highest contamination, to give better information on the likely known distribution and extent of the contamination. Three homes previously cleaned up should also be sampled in the same manner. The intention is to have this sampling done in January or as soon as possible after that.
- That about 10% of homes could be identified as ongoing sentinel/testing points to be used as part of on-going validation of clean-up and monitoring. Testing of these sentinel points could occur on a 6-monthly basis.
- Results to date have identified that homes which have been cleaned are being re-contaminated. However the depositional dust gauges are not indicating that there is lead dust present in the air, the Hi-Vol monitors show that very little lead is moving about the Port area, and there is no significant lead being identified by the monitors away from the Port.
- There is therefore a need to identify what is causing the re-contamination of homes; it may be from external areas/gardens. If this is the case, then the cleanup will need to extend to external surfaces as well as the internal surfaces. Need to remove visible accumulation was discussed if these showed elevated lead levels.
- It was suggested that cleanup of schools and day-care centres be completed during the December-January School Holidays to minimise disruption of school/day-care activities. However, the timing of the appointment and relocation of the Project Director to Esperance (Late January 2009) meant that it is unlikely that the schools and day care centres can be cleaned during the upcoming holidays.
- That the exposure by children to lead will differ depending upon the premises, with exposure at public facilities not being as high as in the home. The cleanup of schools, day-care centres and tourist accommodation will therefore be included based on the results of the initial sampling program. It was noted that these facilities should have a regular and thorough cleaning regime in place and may not require any cleanup.
- The need to determine the best method of cleaning carpets, curtains and soft furnishings. The DOH is to determine an appropriate sampling and cleaning procedure in consultation with the Chemistry Centre.
- The need for protocols for tradespeople working in the ceiling spaces of contaminated properties, and in relation to the

renovation./roof replacement by parties who are not familiar with the lead issue and the need for precautions to be taken.

- That the cleanup is proposed to be in concentric circles radiating out from the Port, and that all areas of Esperance requiring cleanup will be identified and cleaned up. [However, it was also noted that possible hot spots including Nulsen that may not be picked up by the above method. The comment was that by having areas like Nulsen identified it would be sampled and that the transect lines should pick up any other hot spots]
- The DEC is extending the length of its transect lines when conducting the next round of vegetation sampling (March) which will also assist in identifying the extent of impact.

Actions:

- 1) DOH to consult with the Chemistry Centre regarding development of appropriate clean-up standards**
- 2) DOH will consider the development of guidance notes which can be provided to tradespeople.**

6. Standards/Guidelines

Members noted and discussed:

- The DOH is to provide advice on what standards/guidelines would be used for the sampling and validation of lead on external surfaces.
- The 300mg/kg investigation level currently adopted from the National Environmental Protection (*Assessment of Site Contamination*) Measure, 1999 may result in re-contamination of internal surfaces above the currently adopted internal standard. Members noted advice from Peter Skitmore that the 300mg/kg level may not be low enough to prevent recontamination inside houses to the hard surface guideline provided by DOH for children, which is extremely low.
- The standard of cleaning on external hard-stand surfaces should be to remove all visible dust.
- The Shire has collected a number of samples from community members who have cleaned up and re-sampled their own homes. The Steering Committee should obtain these results as they could be useful in determining the effectiveness of cleaning methods for the main cleanup exercise.
- That the homes in the area to be cleaned initially are mainly older houses, of varied construction, and are likely to be very dusty.
- An amendment will be made to the Objectives Section of the Draft Framework; that reference to the clean-up of houses to 0.04ug/cm² only where children under 5 years of age are present be deleted, such that all houses will be cleaned to this standard. This amendment will be made to protect visiting children, and allow for changes in occupancy of properties.
- The Project Director will contact the government agencies involved with the cleanup of Port Pirie and Newcastle in relation to the standards and guidelines for clean-up adopted at these locations. Project Director is to research the purchase of additional hand-held

sampling equipment. Need to determine the most appropriate equipment for sampling and validation of clean-up and purchase the equipment if it is deemed to be beneficial for the program. The currently DEC Niton equipment is suitable for sampling and validation of external areas, but is not sensitive enough for internal surfaces. A more sensitive scanning source than used by DEC is available commercially.

Actions:

- 1) **DOH to provide guidance on acceptable clean-up levels for external paved and non-paved surfaces**
- 2) **Michelle Crisp to coordinate provision of the LED Survey of Lead and Nickel Dusts in Esperance Homes, to members.**
- 3) **Michael Jackson to amend Draft Framework Plan**
- 4) **Project manager to contact New South Wales and SA Governments and USEPA regarding previously used clean-up standards for lead and nickel for internal and external application.**

7. Other Issues

Members noted and discussed:

- That the one of the decisions of government had been to request the Minister for Water, Hon Graham Jacobs, to seek an assessment by the Water Corporation of the feasibility of upgrading the Esperance town water supply.
- There is a need to identify a storage area for any removed soil/insulation/furnishings, prior to it being able to be disposed of at the appropriately licensed landfill.
- That the GPS data system used by the DOH for the rainwater tanks survey would be useful in the plotting of samples from homes in the cleanup program. Data management would be a key project element and will need an appropriate system and resourcing.
- That a community newsletter, similar to the previous government newsletter prepared by DEC, should be prepared to provide details of the cleanup plan and how it will be implemented.
- The establishment of "community cells" as a means of providing information to community members on the way in which the cleaning would be considered. These cells would represent a street/area to be cleaned. A community representative would be nominated by the cell to liaise with the Project Director. In addition, individual community members should be able to contact the Project Director direct. The mechanism of communication would be the Project Director's decision.

Actions:

- 1) **Michael Jackson to seek advice from Graham Jacobs on response from Water Corporation.**

- 2) Shire of Esperance, in consultation with DEC to identify a temporary storage area for any removed materials**
- 3) DOH to consider provision of its GPS data management system to the project manager as part of the data management system for the cleanup program.**
- 4) That a community newsletter should be prepared to provide details of the cleanup plan and how it will be implemented.[All Members]**