



CSIRO Highett - historical overview

The CSIRO Highett site has been in operation for over 50 years with scientists undertaking research and development activities in a variety of fields including building materials, sound and vibration. As CSIRO is consolidating its sites around Australia, it determined that the research and development activities being undertaken at Highett could be consolidated to the CSIRO Clayton Campus. Staff and capability were relocated to Clayton by early 2016.

To ensure the historical importance of the site was captured, a number of current staff and alumni have been working with the Sandringham Historical Society to collect and collate information about the site. This information will become part of the Public Historical Record to celebrate the importance of the Highett site in CSIRO's history.

Early in the site clean-up project, CSIRO met with Bayside City Council and an arborist to determine the retention of several significant trees on the site. Protection measures were put in place for the trees that have been retained in the form of fenced exclusion zones. The Grassy Woodland area has also been protected in this way during the clean-up works.

Arborist assessments revealed that some trees located in close proximity to the buildings that were demolished would need to be removed to ensure the safety of the local community, as the works compromised the root systems and stability.

As the site has been in operation for more than 50 years, many areas of the site and structures contained building materials that were commonly used in that period including asbestos, lead paint and reinforced concrete. These materials have been safely removed as part of the project to ensure the site is in a saleable condition, suitable for residential development.

CSIRO engaged specialist hazardous materials removal companies to assist in the demolition and clean-up works. These companies, experienced in removing hazardous materials in close proximity to houses, put appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety of the local community. In addition CSIRO has engaged an independent licenced asbestos assessor who continuously monitored the removal of hazardous materials and ensured the work was completed in line with current regulations and WorkSafe requirements.

CSIRO set up a range of control measures within the site to ensure the safety of workers, the local community and the environment. Some of the measures included:

- Setting up exclusion zones within the Highett site
- Using air-monitoring devices to assess the surrounding environment. Air monitoring is conducted in line with

Australian Standards and WorkSafe requirements.

- Placing environmental filtration controls over stormwater drains
- Setting up a decontamination zone to clean-up equipment and machinery used during the works
- Inspecting the site daily to ensure it complies with all relevant legislation, regulations and compliance codes.

Demolition and clean-up works have been undertaken in 3 stages:

- Stage 1 was the initial site mobilization and detailed assessment of structures prior to any demolition activities
- Stage 2 was demolition of Northern end of site, including 31 buildings, commenced in April 2016 and was principally completed by December 2017
- Stage 3 was the demolition of 30 buildings in the Southern end of site and included the completion of some minor Stage 2 works. Stage 3 commenced in January 2018.

The Stage 3 works were largely complete by October 2018.

Looking forward

The remaining work is the removal of road surfaces, redundant underground services and asbestos-contaminated soil. The work requires pulling up the road surface and digging out the old services, some of which are in asbestos-containing conduit.

Some excavated soil material is being sifted to remove contaminants with the resulting cleaned material used to backfill excavations. In other areas all contaminated soil is being removed. The contaminated material is being transported off site to appropriate disposal centres. CSIRO continues to monitor the works with our industrial hygienists to ensure that materials are tested and treated accordingly and that the work area is safe.

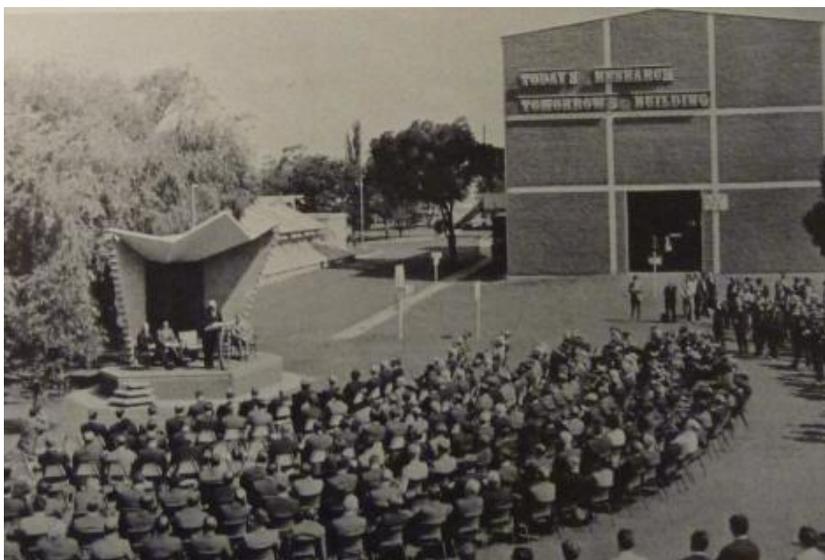
It is a large site and whilst works are only being undertaken on the south end of the site, it is anticipated that the removal activities will be ongoing until the end of this financial year.

Keeping you informed

CSIRO will provide further community updates. These will be issued every couple of months and will be updated on our community web site wp.csiro.au/highettworks/. If you have any questions or concerns please contact us by phone on 1300 363 400 (9am to 5pm) or email highettworks@csiro.au.



Oblique aerial view of the north end of the CSIRO Highett campus, December 1969. The Structures Testing Laboratory is in the centre of the photograph. Source: CSIRO Highett



Opening of the 'Look In' exhibition at CSIRO Highett, 16 February 1970. Source: CSIRO Division of Building Research Annual Report, 1969-70



Oblique aerial view of the south end of CSIRO Highett Laboratories, December 1969. Source: CSIRO Highett

