

CSIRO BELMONT UPDATE



NOVEMBER 2019

LOCAL PRESS

The Geelong Advertiser ran an article on the CSIRO Henry Street Belmont property in their edition of 12 October 2019. The article was titled "In-tents clean-up at Belmont former CSIRO site". The article mentioned that demolition works were due to be completed in 2017. Demolition work was completed in 2017 and the current work being undertaken is to remediate underground contamination created from dry cleaning fluids used at the former CSIRO textile and Fibre Technology laboratory. During this work we have found unexpected additional asbestos materials within soils. The asbestos contaminated soil is being removed from site. We strive to provide accurate information to the public in our newsletters and community updates. However, should you have any concerns about the work we are undertaking, please do not hesitate to contact us via any of the options listed in every newsletter and on our website, as follows:

For more information about the project please contact the project team between 9am and 5pm on 1300 363 400, email Belmontworks@csiro.au or visit the website <https://wp.csiro.au/belmontworks/>

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Unfortunately, further unexpected asbestos contamination in soil has been found on site.

The asbestos material we are finding is in the form of cement bonded material. This material is in small pieces within the topsoil and fill material that may have been brought on to the site over the years or could have been buried during previous demolition and construction activities on the site decades ago. The material is from cement sheet, a product that was used to line external walls and roofs of houses, sheds and even for fences prior to the late 1990s when the cement bonded sheeting material was banned in construction in Australia.

CSIRO has a responsibility to remove all asbestos contaminated soil from the site to ensure the land is suitable for future use, in particular for residential development. CSIRO takes this responsibility very seriously and will continue to excavate any new findings of soil contamination until such time that the Environmental Auditor for the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is confident that we have achieved a clean site. All our site works are carried out in accordance with the EPA and Worksafe guidelines, including air, dust and noise monitoring during the removal works to confirm the work is conducted safely.

Our contractors, Enviropacific Services (EPS), have again separated asbestos contaminated soils from clean areas within their work site. The asbestos contaminated soil has been stockpiled and covered to prevent dust and water ingress. This material will be removed from site and transported to an appropriately licenced waste centre, using the same methodology as previously utilised on site. The transporting of the material from site will commence on 2nd December 2019. We expect 30-40 trucks entering and leaving site per day over a period of 10 days to complete the removal of the current asbestos contaminated soil stockpiles.

EPS continue to excavate non-asbestos contaminated soil for remediation from the pit area and are processing this soil in the large white tent to break the clay in to smaller clumps to enable the release of hydrocarbons. During the processing of soils within the tent, there may be occasional mild odours carried by the wind. This nuisance odour is not harmful, and EPS is attempting to control this odour at the boundary so that it is below what can be smelt by a normal person (the so-called odour threshold).

This odour threshold is fifty times lower than the exposure limits specified in the Workplace Exposure Standards for Airborne Contaminants. The Workplace Exposure standard is a limit that workers can breathe 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, without any harmful effects. EPS will be undertaking regular monitoring each day at the site boundary for nuisance odours and contaminants. If necessary, odour suppressant will be sprayed if nuisance odours are detected at the boundary.

Once the clay is broken-up in the tent, it is being transported by a “moxy” truck and stockpiled along the southern side of site. These stockpiles have filtration material running through the soil. The flexible filtration material is connected to manifolded pipes, extracting and filtering the hydrocarbons from the soil. This extraction process will prevent nuisance odours.

EPS estimate the stockpile construction process to be completed by the end of November 2019 subject to weather and volume of material. The stockpiles will be placed running east to west approximately 20 m away from the south boundary and they will be approximately 2m high and 300m long. At the completion of the stockpiling, the tent will be deconstructed and removed from site.

LOOKING FORWARD

Extraction and filtering of the stockpiled materials to remove hydrocarbons from the soil will take place over approximately 16 weeks, during which time the environment will be monitored. To minimise disruption to neighbours, the extraction system will be surrounded by noise reduction material, such as hay bales.

Stockpiled materials around the site will be covered with tarpaulins to control any water ingress, loss of soil and dust being windblown. When the hydrocarbon level has been reduced to a satisfactory level, the material will be replaced into the excavation hole and compacted. The project team anticipates that the works to be completed by the end of April 2020.

KEEPING YOU SAFE

CSIRO is committed to keeping its staff, contractors and the local community safe during the site remediation projects. To this end, CSIRO has engaged Jacobs, environmental consultants to oversee the work. EPS will conduct noise, air and dust monitoring daily in representative areas to ensure that levels are in line with Victorian legislation.

WORKING HOURS

To minimise disruption to the local community, soil excavation, stockpile construction and maintenance work will be undertaken between 7am and 5pm Monday to Friday. The works will be overseen by environmental consultants, Jacobs. Weekend work is not anticipated.

OTHER INFORMATION

CSIRO will continue to maintain the grounds and verge by ensuring the grass is regularly cut and boundary trees are kept in good order. The fence around the property preventing unauthorised access to site will remain until the completion of the works. Graffiti will be removed/painted over on a monthly schedule.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

CSIRO will provide further community updates during the work. These updates will be issued every couple of months and will be updated on our community website <https://wp.csiro.au/belmontworks/>

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on 1300 363 400 (9am-5pm Monday - Friday), or email us at:

Belmontworks@csiro.au



Formation of stockpiles with ventilation



Progress with SVE stockpiles



Stockpile covered with plastic and extraction pipes



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Benching the soil whilst excavating for the soil vapour extraction material to keep the pit stable



Progress on excavation pit



Asbestos contaminated soil stockpile, covered with heavy black plastic (weighted down with clean soil) to prevent dust and water ingress.



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