

9 July 2013

To the Botany and Hillsdale community

You may have seen allegations in the media this past weekend that claim the EPA has sat on data that shows poisonous substances are present in the soil in a Hillsdale children's playground.

The EPA comprehensively refutes these allegations of a cover-up as we have no sampling data for the playground in Grace Campbell Crescent.

The EPA undertook sampling and testing of 15 sites adjacent to and on Denison St in response to claims of elevated levels of Hexachlorobenzene (HCB) in that area by Mr Andrew Helps. Mr Helps undertook his own testing but would not release full details about his sampling techniques or precise locations to the EPA, so the EPA undertook its own sampling and testing.

This comprehensive EPA testing found HCB levels to be at less than one/one hundredth of the health investigation level prescribed in the national standards – the National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM) - so testing of the playground for HCB was not required.

In addition to testing those samples for HCB the EPA also tested for 94 metals and chemicals. Contrary to the published information in the Sun Herald on July 7 2013, the average levels of chromium and lead on the Sydney Water easement were also found to be below the NEPM health investigation levels.

However we did find PCB levels slightly above the health investigation level on the Sydney Water easement adjacent to Denison St and determined that additional testing for PCB should occur.

Sydney Water is undertaking additional testing for PCB and other contaminants and those results are expected this Wednesday (10 July 2013). The EPA will review those results in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and determine if there are any implications for the playground.

The EPA takes any allegation of contamination very seriously which is why we undertook a comprehensive testing regime in response to Mr Andrew Help's concerns about HCBs.

We are equally concerned about misinformation which can cause the community undue anxiety.

The EPA has been working with the community of Botany for many years and will continue to do so.

The EPA uses nationally agreed Australian standards when it undertakes sampling, analysis and reporting of contaminants. These Australian Standards have recently been reviewed and modified by the National Environment Protection Council.

The EPA's most recent correspondence with Mr Helps about this issue from the EPA Chief Environmental Regulator Mark Gifford can be found here: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/oricabotanycttee/EPAResponseJuly2013.pdf>

You can view the EPA's media release about the Hillsdale testing and Sun Herald story here: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/epamedia/EPAMedia13070701.htm>

The EPA's sampling design guidelines for contamination is available on the website here: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/clm/95059samppgdline.pdf>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Buffier'.

BARRY BUFFIER
Chair and CEO
Environment Protection Authority