



Kevin Humphries MP

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MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 13 February 2015

NSW GOVERNMENT COMMITS MORE THAN \$13 MILLION TO REDUCE LEAD LEVELS AT BROKEN HILL

The NSW Government today announced it has allocated more than \$13 million to rejuvenate the Broken Hill Environment Lead program to address the issue of blood lead levels in local children.

Environment Minister Rob Stokes, Health Minister Jillian Skinner and Western NSW Minister Kevin Humphries said the funding will address the issue of lead contamination and elevated blood lead levels in children in Broken Hill.

“Natural deposition and lead mining have left a legacy of widespread lead contamination throughout Broken Hill and this has had a direct impact on the health of children in Broken Hill,” Mr Stokes said.

“The money allocated will enable the Broken Hill Environmental Lead program to work collaboratively with key stakeholders such as the Far West Local Health District, Broken Hill Lead Reference Group, Broken Hill City Council, the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation and the local community in resolving lead contamination in Broken Hill to provide children of Broken Hill an environmentally safe place to grow up in.”

Mrs Skinner said this funding will assist in the protection of the most vulnerable members of the local community.

“The funding will revive the Environmental Lead program to establish a long term sustainable solution to ensure that children in Broken Hill meet the National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC) goal for blood levels into the future.”

Mr Humphries said the rejuvenated Broken Hill Environmental Lead program builds on previous achievements dating back to 1994 by undertaking research and monitoring at Broken Hill to identify contamination processes, adopt contemporary lead abatement practices and implement public education and awareness campaigns within the community.

“Since the former Labor Government cut funding for this extremely important program in 2006 there has been an unacceptable rise in the rate of children with high blood lead levels,” Mr Humphries said.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to turning this around through providing significant investment to rejuvenate the Broken Hill Environment Lead program.”

Chief Executive of Far West Local Health District Stuart Riley said any intervention which can successfully reduce the level of lead exposure in the local environment will have significant health benefits for the children of Broken Hill.

“We welcome this investment to reduce blood lead levels, particular in children living in this part of NSW,” Mr Riley said.

“Data from the NSW Health Blood Lead Program in 2012 shows that approximately 21 per cent of all children aged 1 to 4 years, and 37 per cent of Aboriginal children aged one to four who were tested had elevated blood lead levels in Broken Hill above the goal set by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) of 10 micrograms of lead per decilitre of blood (ug/dL).”

A report presented to the NSW Government by Mark Taylor, Professor of Environmental Science of at Macquarie University in 2014, presented data on the nature and extent of environmental metal contamination and the risk of children being exposed to lead at playgrounds in the city of Broken Hill.

The study focused on playgrounds because these are readily accessible public places where children interact with the outside environment. The findings within this report will form part of the immediate works for the Broken Hill Environmental Lead program in order to reduce the exposure of lead to children.