

Managing soil with lead in it in north Lake Macquarie

From January 2020, residents in the north Lake Macquarie area can dispose of soil with lead in it at any licensed landfill that receives general household waste.

The Pasmenco Cockle Creek Smelter

This lead and zinc smelter operated in Boolaroo from the late 1800s to 2003. The smelter has caused some environmental and public health issues, including lead fall-out from the stacks.

Soils contaminated by lead fall-out have been identified in an area called the Pasmenco Lead Abatement Strategy area (LAS area) as shown in the map opposite. Properties within this area may have lead in their soil.

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Depending on the level and characteristics of lead in the soil in the Pasmenco Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area, there have been restrictions on its disposal. Until early 2017, some soil needed to be transported to Sydney for disposal, resulting in higher costs.

As an interim arrangement, from 2017 soil with lead in it from the LAS area was able to be

disposed of locally at the Summerhill landfill in Wallsend.

In 2019, the EPA sampled soils in the LAS area. While the level of lead in soil is elevated, the sampling results have shown that the lead is not significantly mobile or 'leachable' from soil. The EPA has issued an immobilisation approval which now applies to these soils, confirming the lead is naturally immobilised. The GIA includes conditions for handling and disposal of soil. The EPA has also issued an exemption from the waste tracking requirements.

The EPA is satisfied that previous disposal restrictions can be lifted with the conditions of the new GIA to be in place. Under the immobilisation approval, soil with lead in it from the LAS area can now be deposited at any EPA licensed landfill that receives general household waste.

Residents do not *have* to remove soil from their property. This is only required if they are renovating or redeveloping their property and are subject to standard council or planning requirements to remediate their site.

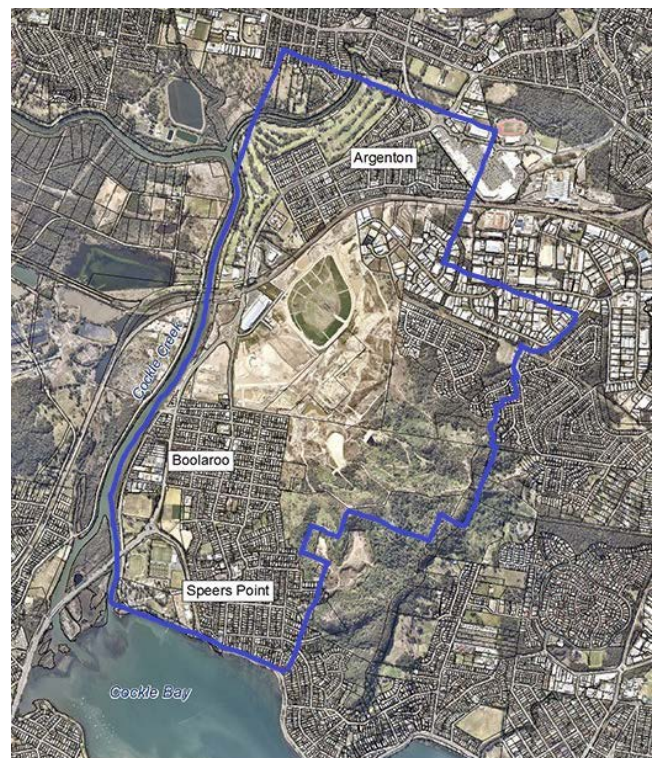


Image 1: the Pasmenco Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area



Image 2: samples of Pasminco black slag

Managing Pasminco black slag

Operation of the Pasminco smelter resulted in a by-product called black slag which also contained residual lead.

Black slag is a black sand-like substance that has good drainage and packing properties

Due to high lead levels in the Pasminco black slag, this material is not suitable for disposal as general household waste. It cannot be landfilled without further assessment.

Some waste companies can receive Pasminco black slag for treatment and disposal.

Anyone wishing to dispose of black slag should contact the EPA for more information.

Financial assistance

Residents who want to rectify land that has been impacted by the Pasminco smelter can apply to Lake Macquarie City Council for financial assistance in the form of grant funds. This includes the disposal of soil with lead in it.

Grants are provided to residents in the LAS area on a priority basis, and more information can be found on Council's website shape.lakemac.com.au/living-safely-with-lead, or by contacting Council directly.

More information

NSW Environment Protection Authority

Phone: 131 555

Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au

Additional Info:

[General Immobilisation Approval 2017/02 for lead contaminated soil in the LAS area](#)

Lake Macquarie City Council

Phone: 4921 0333

Email: Council@lakemac.nsw.gov.au

Additional Info:

[Lake Macquarie Council grant program for community remediation projects web-page](#)

[Lake Macquarie City Council's web-page on contaminated land](#)

[Lake Macquarie City Council's fact sheet on contaminated land](#)

[Lake Macquarie City Council's fact sheet on Pasminco black slag](#)

NSW Environment Protection Authority

Email: info@epa.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.epa.nsw.gov.au

Photos

Image 1: map showing the Pasminco Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS) area; Photo: EPA

Image 2: samples of Pasminco black slag; Photo: Cameron Jennings/EPA

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