



North Lake Macquarie Lead Contamination

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) established the Lake Macquarie Lead Community Reference Group (CRG) and the Lead Expert Working Group (LEWG) in response to community concern about lead contamination from historical smelting operations at Boolaroo and the effectiveness of the Lead Abatement Strategy (LAS).

The NSW Government has committed \$1.8M to fund the LEWG recommendations to manage legacy lead contamination in North Lake Macquarie.

What is the role of the Lake Macquarie Lead CRG?

The Lake Macquarie Lead CRG enables the community to engage directly with government and experts on issues related to potential lead and lead slag contamination.

The CRG works closely with the LEWG, which brings expertise in lead contamination and environmental health.

Further information about the Lake Macquarie Lead CRG and their Terms of Reference is available at: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/community-news/lmc-review-lead-exposure-management/lake-macquarie-lead-community-group

What is the role of the LEWG?

The LEWG was established in 2014 to evaluate the LAS and other remediation activities in North Lake Macquarie. The LEWG includes representatives from NSW EPA, NSW Health, Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC), industry experts and academia.

The LEWG published the *Report on Managing Residual Lead Contamination in North Lake Macquarie* (the Report) in 2016, which detailed 22 recommendations to manage legacy lead contamination.

The recommendations covered health, development and future funding to address the long-term management of lead-related

contamination caused by the former Pasminco lead smelter in Boolaroo. All 22 recommendations were endorsed by LMCC in April 2017.

The Report and LEWG information is available on the EPA website at:

www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/community-news/lmc-review-lead-exposure-management/lead-expert-working-group

What is the current status of the LEWG recommendations?

A collaborative and long-term approach has been taken by LMCC, the EPA, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and NSW Health. The NSW Government supports the implementation of the recommendations through funding.

Lead soil disposal

Residents in the LAS area can dispose of lead affected soil at a reduced cost at Newcastle City Council's Summerhill Waste Management Centre. Residents will pay a reduced rate as the EPA has waived the waste levy that normally applies.

Residents living within the LAS area can register to take soil to Summerhill by contacting the EPA's Waste Compliance team in Newcastle on 02 4908 6800.

There is no deadline for disposal, you can continue to bring loads to the facility by

registering loads with the EPA in advance of visiting the facility.

A map of the scheme's eligible properties and FAQ's are available at:

www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/community-news/lmc-review-lead-exposure-management/lead-soil-disposal-for-lake-macquarie-residents

Health

NSW Health will continue monitoring lead notifications in children in the Boolaroo, Speers Point and Argenton suburbs that make up the LAS area. Annual reminder letters will be sent to GPs identifying children at higher risk of lead exposure to offer blood testing.

NSW Health will notify LMCC of the results of health investigations which require a coordinated response. NSW Health will provide regular updates on public health aspects of lead control and blood lead findings in the area.

Water quality

Ongoing water quality testing of groundwater and surface water will continue around North Lake Macquarie. The EPA will continue to analyse water quality results to identify water pollution in collaboration with LMCC.

The EPA will support a research project to further investigate smelter slag impacts on water quality and provide recommendations to Crown Lands and Water in relation to groundwater extraction. \$50,000 per year for 3 years is allocated to lead research.

Policy and planning

The EPA is reviewing existing legislation and developing an environmental liability framework to address contamination issues.

LMCC are revising their Contaminated Land Policy so that section 149 certificates differentiate between development controls relevant to residential Health Investigation Level for lead.

LMCC will continue to maintain a central database of contaminated land in Lake Macquarie City.

The EPA and LMCC will provide input to the DPE review of the *Environmental Planning and*

Assessment Regulation 2000, which sets out requirements for section 149 certificates, and State Environmental Policies relevant to soil contamination.

Community engagement

The EPA and LMCC play key roles in stakeholder engagement to monitor ongoing issues and to identify future issues regarding legacy lead contamination in Lake Macquarie.

Funding for a contact service and a dedicated engagement officer for distributing up-to-date educational resources will be provided to LMCC to support the community, agencies and other key stakeholders. Funding has been allocated for a dedicated EPA officer to focus on lead issues.

The EPA will allocate \$100,000 to LMCC to develop a streamlined approach to remediation action plans for residents carrying out development work.

Next steps...

A consultant will be engaged by LMCC to prepare Remediation Action Plans for routine development activities where risks can be adequately identified and managed.

A risk-based decision-making tool will be developed in consultation with the community to identify and prioritise access to services.

Community Grants of \$100,000 per year will be administered by LMCC, for investigations and high priority remediation.

LMCC will continue to maintain their Environmental Management Plan to deal with legacy lead contamination on land within its control.

Where can I find more information?

More information on lead in the area is available at: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/community-news/lmc-review-lead-exposure-management

If you have any questions or concerns, call:

- NSW Environment Line **131 555**