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MEDIA RELEASE

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WORK UNDERWAY TO REDUCE LEAD IN BROKEN HILL PLAYGROUNDS

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Broken Hill City Council have joined forces and started work on reducing the exposure of children to lead in Broken Hill playgrounds.

Environment Minister Mark Speakman said the EPA had allocated \$225,000 in funding from the Environmental Trust through the Contaminated Land Management Program for additional measures to address lead contamination in the playgrounds identified in 2014 as high risk.

“This money is in addition to the \$13 million allocated by the NSW Government over the next five years to rejuvenate the Broken Hill Environment Lead Program,” Mr Speakman said.

“Preliminary surveys and inspections have already been carried out at a number of sites, with further work including installing extra signage, roofing and hand washing facilities, as well as high pressure cleaning and some soil removal,” he said.

“The EPA has worked closely with staff from Broken Hill City Council to develop a project plan that co-ordinates the work required at key playgrounds with the needs and priorities of local residents, council and health experts.”

EPA Program Manager Peter Oldsen said that while it was a priority to reduce the risk of exposure for children right now, it also was important to make sure there are adequate systems in place to protect the health of the wider community and local environment in the longer term.

“Lead contamination in Broken Hill is a concern for the EPA. We will continue to work closely with key local government, community and health groups to prioritise the playground sites and to ensure the appropriate work is done to reduce risk as quickly and effectively as possible.”

Broken Hill City Council General Manager Therese Manns said the partnership was an important step in reducing lead exposure in children.

“While Council will play an important role in this project, the fact remains that hygiene, particularly washing hands after children have used play equipment, is very important in reducing lead exposure.”

“It is all about working together to mitigate risks,” Ms Manns said.

For more information about this five-year program see:

<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/MinMedia/EPAMin150213.pdf>