

Collingwood Depot Q & A

Q. Why is the site contaminated?

It is not unusual for a site, such as the Collingwood Depot, to be contaminated as many old industrial sites across inner Melbourne contain some form of contamination.

Because of this, Council has successfully treated many contaminated sites and has procedures and a policy in place to ensure contamination is treated safely and effectively.

The site contains a number of underground fuel tanks. These underground fuel tanks have deteriorated over time and some fuel has seeped around the tanks. Preliminary testing has also indicated that there are traces of the fuel in the soil below the surface.

Q. Why are the tanks leaking?

The tanks are old and have slowly deteriorated over time. This is why Council, in-line with EPA legislation, has taken a proactive approach and is getting this sites tested, decontaminated and the underground tanks removed.

Q. How far has the contamination spread?

Preliminary results indicate there is some fuel around the underground tanks and there are traces of fuel in the soil below the surface.

Analysis of the surface water samples taken from Merri Creek did not detect the presence of fuels associated with the contaminated groundwater.

Protection of the community, natural environment and Merri Creek are paramount for Council.

Council has informed the EPA, Merri Creek Management Committee, and Melbourne Water of the situation, and is closely working with all of these organisations to ensure procedures and treatments are carried out in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

Q. Does this contamination pose a health or safety risk for near by properties or residents?

HLA Envirosciences (<http://www.hla-enviro.com.au>) has advised Council that the contaminants on this site are stable and do not, in their current state pose any health or safety risk, but further testing is needed to understand the extent of the contamination

Council believes it is important to move forward on this issue to ensure no contaminants leach into Merri Creek in the future.

Q. What has Council done about soil contamination in Yarra?

Council has been very active in dealing with and treating soil contamination across the municipality.

In September 2002, in consultation with the community and in accordance with EPA guidelines, the City of Yarra formally adopted the *Community Safety and Management of Soil Contamination Policy*.

This policy was believed to be the first of its kind in the State and used as a model for other councils in Victoria.

In accordance with the policy Council conducted a municipal-wide audit of 55 potentially sensitive sites, including childcare centres, maternal and child health centres, kindergartens and local playgrounds.

This process, which cost Council around \$300,000, involved conducting analysis, testing and risk management assessments on each site.

Test results indicated remediation works were required on 39 of these sites. Council has successfully completed all of the required works.

Council still follows this policy today when identifying and treating contaminated sites in Yarra. This is the case with the Collingwood Depot site.

In-line with EPA guidelines, Council proactively tested the Collingwood Depot. On receiving initial test results from HLA Envirosiences, Council acted quickly and started implementing a contamination action plan and reconvened the Soil Contamination Committee.

Council has written to near-by residents, placed signage on the site, has set up a separate section on its website with weekly updates, and plans to hold an information session in April for residents and local businesses.

Council has also engaged HLA Envirosiences to conduct further testing, including installing groundwater monitoring wells.

Q. Are there any *environmental implications*?

Council has been informed that the fuel in its current state is stable. However Council is taking immediate action with this site because of its proximity to the Merri Creek.

The surface water in the creek has been tested, and no contamination was identified.

Council has informed the Merri Creek Management Committee and Melbourne Water, and they are happy with the steps Council is taking to deal with the situation.

Q. Is this connected to the contamination issue at the MFB site on Burnley Street in Richmond?

No – the MFB site is owned by the State Government. It is not Council land.

In 2004 Council proactively tested underground tanks at the Burnley Depot site, which is adjacent to the MFB site and results came back clear.

Council has requested information from MFB in relation to how they plan to rectify this issue.

Q. *Where can we get more information?*

For further information, please contact Council on 9205 5555.